BLESSED JOHN
The Wonderworker



Blessed John the Wonderworker

A Preliminary Account of the Life and Miracles of Archbishop John Maximovitch

by Fr. Seraphim Rose and Abbot Herman

Compiled and Edited by the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA BROTHERHOOD
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by Fr. Theodore Jurewicz, painted in
preparation for St. John's canonization.

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Preface to the First Edition

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. (Psalm 111:6)

One of the most striking things in the life of the Orthodox Church in recent years has been the extraordinary response of Orthodox believers in many Local Churches and jurisdictions to the remarkable life of the reposed hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archbishop John Maximovitch, who served the Church as bishop first of Shanghai in the Far East, then of Western Europe, and finally of Western America and San Francisco. This righteous man, who even in our cold and faint-hearted century, was like unto the great Orthodox hierarchs of old, has inspired such love and veneration among Orthodox Christians, many of whom never knew him when he was alive, that with his death in 1966 one may say that a whole new chapter in his "life" has opened: precisely that of his veneration by the Orthodox faithful.

The present volume is a preliminary collection of materials in English on Archbishop John, such as have appeared in *The Orthodox*

Word journal since 1966. These materials include a brief briography and several more detailed chapters on his life; but primarily they are an account of the world-wide veneration of Archbishop John which has risen in these years, as well as of Archbishop John's own response to this veneration; his miracles and manifestations to those who call upon his prayers with faith and know that he is not "dead" at all, but alive in God and able to answer our heartfelt entreaties. Inspired by the Russian-language *Chronicle* of Bishop Savva of Edmonton, (St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, 1976), the present volume includes translations of several of the chapters of this book, but it is rather broader in its scope and includes much material (including new testimonies and miracles which have occurred since 1976) that is not contained in the Russian volume.

In the early Christian centuries there were many books detailing the achievements of God's righteous men and the veneration of the faithful for them: the *Lausiac History* of Palladius, the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus, the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great, the many *Patericons* and individual saints. In our poor days the righteous have become few, and there are not many books about them. May this Chronicle serve to inspire the Orthodox Christians of these last times who, it may be, have become faint-hearted in their labors of piety; may it show them that, despite our own weaknesses and failings, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever* (Heb. 13:8), and that there is nothing

more pleasing to God and more fruitful for the salvation of men than the righteous life in Christ of which Archbishop John is such a shining example.

Father Herman
St. Herman of Alaska Monastery
Platina, California
Christmas, 1979

Preface to the Third, Revised Edition

In the twenty years since the repose of our beloved founder and inspirer, Blessed John Maximovitch, our St. Herman Brotherhood has labored to spread the good news of his sanctity. His veneration by the faithful is now more widespread than ever before, as are the miracles he continues to perform for those who entreat his intercession. Recently we published the reminiscences of one of his spiritual daughters (in *The Orthodox Word* nos. 123-124), and in the wonderful response we received there was one common element: the readers said that they could not help but weep when they read about Blessed John's life. Indeed, was not this how people responded to this marvelous man of prayer when he was still a pilgrim on earth? When he would walk into prisons, hardened criminals who had never seen or heard of him would inexplicably break out into tears. A power emanated from him that drew people to him, much more than did even the countless miracles he performed. This

was the power of Christian love, that awesome mystery which the world cannot understand but at the same time cannot resist. Nothing can conquer it, for its source is the very Creator of all. Being in mystical communion with God, Blessed John overflowed with this love. And the love he gave is, after twenty years, still being reciprocated as it is poured out from the hearts of believers all over the world.

Anyone who acknowledges even the idea of sanctity cannot deny the inescapable fact that Archbishop John is a Saint. He has already in a sense been "canonized" by the piety of the faithful, which in the Orthodox Church is the ultimate criterion for sainthood. One of his closest spiritual children, Archimandrite Mitrophan, zealously propagated blessed John's glorification as a true Saint of the latter times. Before his repose in January of 1986, Fr. Mitrophan repeated his appeal to our Brotherhood, asking that we continue to spread his elder's veneration. And so, with the obvious help of God, we are now coming out with the third printing of our book, *Blessed John*: a preliminary account of Archbishop John's life and miracles. We offer it to contemporary Christians in order to strengthen their faith in the difficult times ahead. And we are thankful to all the humble, God-loving souls whose number is too great to mention here individually, but without whose support we would not have been able to do our work. Finally, we ask that all who read this little volume raise their hearts in prayer for the unworthy publishers.

May our God, Who is so glorious in His Saints, bless us one and all.

Abbot Herman
St. Herman Brotherhood
New Valaam
Annunciation, 1986

Part I

MATERIALS ON THE LIFE OF BLESSED JOHN

Chapter 1

Bishop Savva:

First Chronicler of Blessed John's Life and Miracles

Orthodox life, whether in parishes or monasteries or deserts, proceeds on its normal quiet course for the most part unobserved, being made up of the daily struggles of ordinary sinners who yet hope in their salvation. But by God's grace a part of this hidden life in Christ is made manifest in the outstanding examples of God's action among men and holy exploits undertaken in His name. The aim of these chronicles, whether of a single Saint or a whole people, is to edify and inspire the new generation of Christian strugglers, who often grow faint and are tempted to relax in the battle to reach their heavenly homeland.

Especially in our days of feeble faith is the temptation strong to relax or give up entirely the struggle for salvation, and this century for Orthodox Christians sometimes seems, more than anything else, a chronicle of failures, material rather for idle gossip than

for a worthy record. Where are the events in our time worthy of a chronicler like the great St. Nestor of the Kiev Caves?

And yet our inglorious century too is providing citizens for the heavenly kingdom, and even heroes of faith. They do not appear in outward glory and splendor, and one must look harder to find them than in earlier centuries; but they do exist, and they also await their chronicler.

One such chronicler of our times was the late Bishop Savva of Edmonton (+1973), who was so struck by the life of Archbishop John that he spent the last years of his life collecting materials for a whole book on him. Many of these materials were published in the church periodical *Orthodox Russia*, but much material remained unpublished at his death, and he did not have the opportunity to put all that he had into proper order as he wished. On his death he left this material and his unfinished book to the Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, which has taken as its sacred duty to continue and complete his work to the best of its ability. The book which has resulted is not a Life of Archbishop John, but rather precisely a *chronicle* of his veneration and of the manifestation of his holy life and miracles to the Orthodox Christians of these latter times. The first volume of this work was issued (in Russian) for the tenth anniversary of the repose of Archbishop John under the title: *A Chronicle of the Veneration of Archbishop John Maximovitch.*

The *Chronicle* is valuable first of all not as much for the actual material it gives as

for its *evaluation* of Archbishop John. So often it happens in our times that true righteous ones finish their course in such humility and lack of outward glory that their memory soon fades into virtual oblivion and the benefit of their holy lives is largely lost for those who follow them.

A worthy chronicler like Bishop Savva can therefore do a great service to the Church precisely by his proper evaluation of the holy man he has taken for his concern. For this evaluation of Archbishop John, Bishop Savva does not trust merely his own opinions or feelings, but calls on many venerable witnesses. Thus, whole chapters or parts of chapters are devoted to testimony of Vladika John's holy life by Metropolitan Philaret (ch. 20), Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky (chs. 20-21), Archbishop Averky (ch. 1), Archbishop Nikon (ch. 29), Archimandrite Constantine (ch. 7), Bishop Nicholas Velimirovitch (ch. 13), Archpriest Valery Lukianov (ch. 22), the church historian Nicholas Talberg (ch. 23), and (the greater part of the book) the simple church people who experienced his love and the miracles worked by his prayers. Another very valuable part of the book is devoted to passages from the Holy Fathers and parallels from the Lives of Saints which shed light on Vladika John's sanctity.

But the most endearing part of the *Chronicle* is the testimony of Vladika Savva himself. In every word of his, and especially in his sermons on Vladika John (chs. 2, 3, 11), one feels the boundless love and

veneration of the younger hierarch for the older, his fervor to communicate his *value* to the church people who cannot afford to lose such a treasure, and also his sorrow that in our times of the cooling of faith and love not many will understand him, or see the need for such fervor. In his zeal for the memory of a man who was a true fool for Christ's sake in the midst of our 20th-century life (even church life) of calculation and petty logic—Bishop Savva himself became a fool for Christ, caring nothing for the opinions of this world as long as he could speak the truth concerning one who lived by the totally different standards of the Orthodox spiritual life.

I.
*The Necrology of Bishop Savva**

by Archbishop Athanasius of Argentina

We have received the sad news that on January 30, 1973, Bishop Savva (Sarachevitch) died in the city of Edmonton, Canada. Having served as Bishop of Edmonton since 1958, he had been in retirement since September, 1971.

Bishop Savva was born on February 22, 1902, in the city of Lyutavitch in Yugoslavia (Belgrade region). In 1923 he finished the higher school in the city of Chachak-Kraguyevatz, and then he entered the department of Law of the University of Belgrade, after

* *Nasha Strana*, Buenos Aires, no. 1198, Feb. 6, 1973.

'finishing which he occupied the positions of lawyer and judge in the cities of Trelog, Chachak, Gnilas, and Belgrade. In the intervals between his duties as judge he began to study in the Department of Theology at the University of Belgrade, and he finished this course in 1943.

Bishop Savva was a highly educated and a just man. He did not fear or hesitate to accuse injustice and falsehood.

Finding himself in the emigration after the Second World War, he came to Buenos Aires at the beginning of 1948 and soon went to Bishop Leonty in Paraguay to the monastery which the latter established there.

There Bishop Leonty tonsured him a monk and ordained him deacon on the feast of the Annunciation in the same year. From Paraguay he returned to Buenos Aires, where Archbishop Panteleimon of Argentina and Buenos Aires ordained him priest on August 15, 1949 (o.s., the Dormition of the Mother of God). He was assigned to the Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Buenos Aires.

In December, 1956, Bishop Athanasius of Argentina assigned him as priest of the Holy Protection Church in Temperley, where he served until his departure for New York in August, 1958.

By decree of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia he was consecrated bishop of Edmonton, a vicar of the Canadian Diocese. His consecration took place in the Synodal church in New York City on September 15/28, 1958.

The reposed Bishop Savva had great

veneration for Archbishop John Maximovitch of San Francisco and wrote a number of articles on him in *Orthodox Russia*. Among the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia he was an outstanding archpastor in his education, eloquence, and zealous service to the Church.

Two weeks before his death, Bishop Savva wrote a letter to his friend in Buenos Aires in which, among other things, he wrote: "As for me, glory be to God, I am living quietly. I would not want to change my situation. St. Gregory the Theologian wrote: 'For those who leave thrones do not lose God, but they shall have a See above, which is much higher and more secure than these Sees below.'"

Eternal memory to the reposed hierarch.

II.
Bishop Savva, Zealot of Spiritual Renewal

Some thirty years ago Bishop Savva, then a practicing judge in Yugoslavia, abandoned his worldly career and consciously entered upon the path of service to Christ's Church. Finding himself abroad after the Second World War, he entered the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and to his very death he served this Church with a rare devotion and zeal, revealing himself not only as a loving and much-loved pastor, but also as an awakener of the Orthodox conscience.

Having become a bishop, his concern

reached out to the whole of Russia abroad, and through the pages of *Orthodox Russia* he tried to awaken the Orthodox Russian people to an awareness of the apocalyptic nature of the times and of their calling and responsibility to be *conscious* Orthodox believers. In the early years of his episcopacy he called for the formation of "Brotherhoods of Spiritual Renewal," and later he placed special emphasis on the need for redoubled prayer for suffering Russia. His fervent appeals did awaken some response, but in the end the result was not too great, doubtless owing chiefly to the extremely unfavorable conditions of the Russian emigration, overwhelmed as it is by worldly cares and temptations.

Bishop Savva's concern extended also to new converts to Orthodoxy, and in particular he entered into contact with and inspired many English-speaking converts in America and Canada.

In the last years of his life, Bishop Savva undertook a new labor of love and zeal, and it is very likely for this that he will be most remembered. He early recognized the great spiritual stature of Archbishop John Maximovitch and was one of those hierarchs who gathered around him and acknowledged him as their spiritual leader; and when the need arose, he came to Archbishop John's defense, considering it providential that he could use his knowledge of law in order to help him when he was unjustly brought to court in San Francisco.

In the first months after Archbishop

John's repose in 1966, there appeared in the Russian press many personal testimonies of his holiness and ascetic life and of what he meant to individual members of his flock. Soon, however, these began to appear less frequently, and it was evident that their significance was limited and chiefly personal and that by themselves they would not preserve the memory of the holy hierarch beyond the lifetimes of those who already knew him. It was then that Bishop Savva began to publish his own material on Archbishop John. This appeared in the form of fifteen articles in *Orthodox Russia* in 1967 and 1968, and it was soon apparent that this was material with a different dimension and purpose. In the place of limited individual memories, he offered a collection of personal testimonies, carefully selected and verified, which were arranged so as to point out various characteristics and aspects of Vladika John's life and sanctity. More than this, Bishop Savva, with his great love for and knowledge of the Holy Fathers (at his death he left a collection of patristic texts written out in his own hand), interspersed these testimonies with citations from the lives and writings of the Holy Fathers, in order to make clear the whole Orthodox tradition of sanctity in which Vladika John had his definite place.

In these articles Bishop Savva discusses and places in patristic context such aspects of Vladika John's sanctity as his miraculous healings and exorcisms; his strict asceticism and sleeplessness; his appearance

in dreams after his repose; his clairvoyance; striking incidents such as the visible fire which once appeared when he served the Divine Liturgy; the bitter persecution which he suffered; and even that which very few as yet have come to value in him, perhaps because almost never before has this kind of sanctity been joined to hierarchical rank: his foolishness for Christ's sake. Bishop Savva in these articles offered in effect a brief course in patristic education to the Orthodox people, and thereby he perhaps sowed seeds that will eventually bring much greater fruits than all his other praiseworthy labors for spiritual renewal.

Bishop Savva's own comments on Vladika John in these articles are revealing and significant. In one of them he writes: "I write about Vladika John and everything somehow becomes pleasant in my soul. I would not want any important information about him to be lost" (*Orthodox Russia*, 1967, no. 16). He was constantly astounded by the wonder of such sanctity in today's world: "What great power was revealed in this small, thin body! What apostolic zeal and burning of spirit! And in general, what a miracle of the contemporary world he was!" (1967, no. 6) At times he reproaches the insensitivity and coldness of the Orthodox people: "Oh, what a great righteous man and man of prayer we had and did not know how to value him!" (1967, no. 7) For him Vladika John is more alive and accessible after his death than before: "A wondrous miracle: Vladika, even after death, comforts his flock, those who

revere him, and all who come to his grave" (1967, no. 14). Bishop Savva openly compares Vladika John to the great saints of the past and places him in their midst: "And so, at that time there was St. Simeon the Stylite [who exorcised demons], and now Vladika John. That was in ancient times, but now it is in our own day. The power of God, just as through the holy Stylite, so now also through Vladika John, has acted and exorcised the evil spirit of the torturer. *Wondrous is God in His Saints, the God of Israel* (1967, no. 17)."

It may be that Bishop Savva saw in Vladika John a key, as it were, to that spiritual renewal for which he labored; doubtless he saw in his glorification a source of great spiritual strength for the faithful. In one of his articles in *Orthodox Russia* (1967, no. 19), Bishop Savva pointed out the little-known fact that it was a Serbian hierarch, Bishop Nicholas Velimirovitch, who in large measure gave the impetus for the canonization of St. John of Kronstadt by the Russian Church Outside of Russia. He thought the time was already ripe for this after the First World War, and by the 1930's a service and akathist had been written to St. John and published for private use by the faithful; but it was especially Bishop Nicholas' letter to Metropolitan Anastassy in 1952 which led to the formation of a canonization committee (under the chairmanship of Archbishop John) and, eventually, to the canonization itself in 1964. And now it is also a Serbian hierarch, Bishop Savva—who, however, had a devotion

to the Russian Church and people which is not surpassed even among Russian hierarchs!—who has given the first impetus for the future canonization, in God's time, of Archbishop John, an event for which he was consciously laying the foundation and preparing the Orthodox people. Thus he himself becomes a chapter in the life and glorification of Blessed Archbishop John!

At his death, which occurred on the feast day of one of his beloved Holy Fathers whom he was always quoting, St. Anthony the Great, Bishop Savva left unpublished materials on Archbishop John, having hoped one day to publish a whole book on him. These materials he left to the Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, thus giving us his blessing to continue this work for him.

The following sermon well shows the great love and zeal of Bishop Savva toward the holy hierarch, and his eloquence in expressing them (from *Orthodox Russia*, 1966, no. 16):

III.
Sermon of Bishop Savva

Spoken on the 40th day
after the repose of Archbishop John

Fathers, friends, brethren and sisters, hear me. I have come to pay respect to the newly-reposed slave of God, Vladika Archbishop John. I have come to pray together with you for the repose of his soul on this signifi-

cant and decisive fortieth day, the day when the place is determined where his soul will dwell until the general and terrible judgment of God, at which the fate of each of us will be finally decided for all eternity. I have come to look once more at this city in which he lived, at the holy temple in which he prayed, at the streets where he walked, at the hospitals in which he visited the sick. I have come to look once more upon his flock which he loved so much, upon the youth whom he so wondrously attracted to the Church of God. I have come, not without grief, I say, to this place of his sufferings of soul, the place where he bore his crown of thorns, his difficult cross.

I was with him from the beginning of his sufferings here, and I helped him while he was alive as well as I could and knew how; and would it be honorable to leave him now without respect, without prayer together with you for his soul which suffered so much, on this day which is so great for him?! He was my friend and father and—forgive me—my heart is there, in this confining tomb, in the grave with Vladika. My heart weeps over my father! However, these tears are only tribute-money paid to our human nature. It is not right to give oneself over to excessive sorrow for the reposed, for *the remembrance of the righteous is with praises* (Prov. 10:7). Let us marvel at the greatness of God: how wondrous is God in His Saints!

Yes, the death of the righteous is the end of the battle with the passions of the

flesh; after death the strugglers are glorified and receive victorious crowns.

Who, if not Vladika John, mastered his body? As you know, he did not give it rest day or night. Only a shadow remained of it. His bodily members were worn out from fasting and from the labor of vigil. Grant him, O Lord, the eternal stronghold and lead him into Thy eternal light!

With the hope of the ancient saints he labored fervently to give rest to those sorrowing and in need. May he repose in Thy harbor, O Lord!

Sorrow has come to us: we have been deprived of him who took care of us. I received a letter from him in which his concern for me was manifested. Perhaps this was the last letter that he wrote in his life—he wrote it on July 1st, and on the seal of the Seattle post office on the envelope is indicated the date of July 2nd, in the afternoon, that is, the day of his repose.

But we must know that the hour of his departure was determined by the Lord; wherefore, restrain your tears and raise your voice in praise of this struggler!

O our beloved Vladika! The Church remembers your zeal, for you were her true archpastor, and by your prayers you saved your flock!

You were a priest like unto Aaron; you were a chief-priest like unto Moses; Joseph did you emulate in continence, and in zeal Elias.

Always before your eyes was the image of your Lord; with indefatigable zeal you

strove toward the goal which the Lord pointed out to you; wherefore as His faithful slave the Lord called you to Himself and separated you from us.

Your working day did not end with night; night was the field of your labors of prayer. Therefore, it may be that it happened not without God's Providence that we sang your funeral and buried you at night.

Now you no longer bear the burden of your body; from henceforth your lot is in Paradise.

Who does not weep over your departure? Who does not rejoice over the crown which you have obtained? Praise be to Him Who chose you!

Your voice has become silent for us, but may your blessings be poured out abundantly on us! We are deprived of seeing your face, but may your name shine out among us!

You have left us orphans, our father, but may your prayer be for us a mother, and for its sake may the all-praised Trinity protect our souls! From that holy altar at which you served holily and reverently, may the glorification of your memory ascend from ages unto ages!

May your prayer overshadow your flock! Pray for its salvation. May all who have now gathered to pay respect to your memory receive the blessing of your prayers; may they one day rejoice with you in the heavenly bridal chamber, and may they magnify and glorify Him Who chose you!

O righteous God! With the Saints grant rest to the much-suffering soul of Thy slave,

our beloved Archbishop John! Amen.

IV.
From Bishop Savva's Chronicle

MAN OF PRAYER

While Vladika John was still alive, a woman in San Francisco told me much that was interesting about him. I asked her to write down some of what she had said. Here is some of what she sent:

"The Chinese Communists did not allow my husband, Gregory Popov, out of China when he was going to come to me three years ago [about 1958]. They gave him injections of tetanus instead of smallpox, and he died of blood poisoning in Tientsin. I wept bitterly and fell into despondency. At this time Vladika John was in San Francisco. After the All-night Vigil he came up to me and said: 'I have heard of your sorrow.' I burst into bitter tears. Vladika went, took a candle, prayed, and placed it on the table of remembrance, and then came up to me and firmly made the sign of the Cross over me. At that moment I felt as though an enormous weight had been removed from my head and my whole body, and it became so easy for me, and I completely stopped weeping and even forgot my sorrow.

"Another incident, in San Francisco: Mrs. Pribylovskaya was very upset and wept over her husband, who was to be operated on. The night before the operation she came to Vladika. He immediately went with her to

the hospital and prayed for a long time over her husband. In the morning the doctor ordered the patient to be brought into the operating room. Here the surgeon examined the patient and said that he was well, the tumor had disappeared, and no operation was necessary. The doctors said it was God Who had healed him. Mrs. Pribylovskaya and her husband are both well and are working.

"Dr. Bill told me the following: In the Russian Hospital in Shanghai there was a critically ill woman and she begged everyone to call Vladika John so that he would give her Holy Communion and pray for her. The doctor told the nurses not to disturb Vladika, since the sick woman was dying. The next day, to the astonishment of all, Vladika came to the hospital and went right to the ward where the sick woman was. 'Why are you preventing me from praying?' he said to her. 'Right now I have to serve Liturgy.' He gave her the Holy Mysteries, blessed her, and left. She fell asleep and after this began to quickly recover."

G. Baranova-Popova

What can one say to all this? The impression is striking, and therefore with great sadness I say: Oh, what a great righteous one and man of prayer we had, and did not know how to value him!

A CASE OF EXORCISM IN OUR OWN DAYS

Here we print an account of the healing of a demon-possessed man in Shanghai by our man of prayer, Vladika John, in the years

when he was Bishop of Shanghai (1934-1949).

"Once I came to the cemetery to pray at the grave of my mother. I stood reflecting: which is better, to live or to die? Suddenly I heard a man's voice: 'Good morning!' I shuddered from the unexpectedness of it. This man asked me who was buried here. I replied that it was my mother. He continued the conversation. "That is normal, that your mother lies here; but for me it is my son who lies here. He was young, under thirty years old, and I rejoice that he has already died."

"I was thunderstruck, hearing what he said, and of course I asked: 'But why do you rejoice?' He replied that he rejoiced because his son was healed before his death from demonic possession and, thanks to Vladika John, he died a true Christian.

"I asked him: 'You mean that your son had a nervous ailment?'

"'No, my son was possessed. He hated everything holy, all holy icons and crosses he tore up into the tiniest pieces and very much rejoiced over this. I would bring him to Vladika John and he made him stand on his knees and put on his head the Cross, and sometimes the Gospel. My son would be very sad after this, and sometimes he would run out of the Cathedral. But Vladika told me not to despair. He would continue to pray for him, and in time he would recover; but for the time being let him continue to be treated by doctors. "And do not take it so hard," he said; "the Lord is not without mercy."'

"Thus it dragged on for several years,

he related. The son was taken to Minchon (a home for the psychologically ill), and sometimes he was let out to go home, and then his father would again lead him to the Cathedral. Sometimes he was given Holy Communion, when his father would see that he was in such a state that he would not run out of the church immediately after receiving Communion in order to spit it out. Just as before, he would tear up crosses and icons, but he became somehow calmer, and he began to read the Gospel. The father understood that the prayers of Vladika John had reached God.

"He was home one time, lying in bed and reading the Gospel. His face was so bright and joyful. And he said: 'You know, Papa, we have to be in Minchon; I have to go there; there the Spirit of God will cleanse me from the spirit of evil and darkness, and then I will depart to the Lord. Let's go quickly and make the arrangements.'

"The father immediately went to all the offices and insisted that his son be accepted, since earlier they had told him that his son was not dangerous for the people around him and he could be kept at home. He was helped in everything by the emigrant committee and by a Chinese doctor whose wife had helped Russians a great deal and had even adopted a Russian child.

"They brought him to Minchon (25 or 30 miles from Shanghai). In two days the father came to visit him and saw that his son was absolutely impossible: he was restless, constantly moving on his bed; and then he suddenly began to shout: 'Don't do it; don't

come near me, I don't want you!'

The father looked, and looked, and went into the corridor to look some more, to see who was coming and where, who it was that had disturbed the spirit of evil that was in his son. The corridor was long and looked out on an alley. There he saw an automobile, and from it Vladika John had come out and was heading for the hospital. The father went into the ward again and saw that his son was writhing on the bed and shouting: 'Don't come near. I don't want you. Go away, go away!' Then he became calm and began quietly to pray, whispering the prayers. The father likewise began to pray. At this time he heard a door open and close somewhere, and he heard steps in the corridor.

"The sick man jumped up from bed and ran along the corridor in his pajamas. Meeting Vladika, he fell down before him on his knees and wept, begging him to chase out of him the spirit of evil.

"Vladika laid his hands on his head and read prayers, then he took him by the shoulders and led him into the ward, where he also laid him on the bed and prayed over him. Then he gave him Holy Communion.

"When Vladika had left, the sick man said: 'Well, now at last my healing has been accomplished, and now the Lord will take me to Himself. Papa, take me quickly; I must die at home.'

"When the father brought him home, he was so happy to see everything in his own room, and especially the icons, and he began to pray and took the Gospel.

"The next day he began to hurry his father to call a priest quickly to give him Holy Communion once more.

"The father said that he had just received Communion the day before, but the son objected and said: 'Papa, quickly, quickly, or you won't be in time.'

"The father called a priest. The priest came and gave the son Communion once more. And while the father accompanied the priest, Father Sergius Borodin, to the stairway and returned, his son's face had already changed and become somehow old. Again he smiled to him, but already without movement. And only his eyes, as it were, said: 'Papa, farewell, how good it is!'

"I asked who had made such a splendid memorial for his son. He replied that it was the Chan family, Chinese people who were his good friends and very kind people. Later I became acquainted with these Chinese people, and they confirmed all of this for me."

Maria Y.

This incident is very interesting. It sometimes happens that evil spirits are the instruments of God's wrath, and God allows them to cause suffering to people for their sins, so that at least through suffering they might come to self-awareness, repent of their sins, and be corrected.

In the *Prologue* (Lives and Sayings of Saints) under September 1st we read the following story:

Once a certain priest was sitting in the church porch and reading the Holy Gospel.

While reading, suddenly he felt as if some kind of dark and ominous cloud had surrounded him, and at the same time the light was extinguished in his eyes and his mind was darkened, and he was paralyzed in all his members and became dumb.

And he remained in this frightful affliction for nine years and suffered so much that, lying on his bed, he could not turn from side to side without someone's help. Meanwhile, it happened that finally his relatives, having heard of the miracles which St. Simeon the Stylite was performing, took the priest and carried him to the Saint. And when they had not quite reached the monastery in which Simeon was living and had lain down to rest, at this time it was revealed from above to the Saint, who was standing at prayer, concerning the affliction of the priest and that he was approaching. Then the Saint called one of his disciples, gave him holy water, and said: "Take this water and hasten quickly out of the monastery. Near it you will find a sick priest being carried on a bed; sprinkle him with holy water and tell him the following: Sinful Simeon tells you, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise and leave your bed and come to Simeon yourself.'" The disciple went and did as the Saint had indicated to him. The priest immediately became well, came to the Saint and fell at his feet. Simeon said to him, "Arise and do not fear. Even if the devil has brought sorrow upon you for nine years, still God's love for mankind did not forget you and did not allow you to perish utterly. Know

also that the devil was allowed to offend you because you stood in the holy altar without fear and reverence, because you listened to slanderers and those who were slandered by them you deprived of Holy Communion without seeking out the truth. Thereby you sorrowed God and greatly rejoiced the devil, under whose dark power you thus fell. But now, seeing that God's love for mankind and His mercies have been multiplied in you, release those whom you saddened by excommunication, and just as God has had mercy on you, do you likewise to them." After these words the priest departed from the Saint with great joy and fulfilled all that he had commanded him.

And so, at that time there was St. Simeon the Stylite, and now Vladika John. That was in ancient times, but now it is in our own day. The power of God, just as through the holy Stylite, so now also through Vladika John, has acted and exorcised the evil spirit of the torturer.

Wondrous is God in His Saints, the God of Israel!

Chapter 2

The Vita Prima of Blessed John

1896-1966

Barely six months ago* there reposed in the Lord a hierarch of the Church of Christ whose life so extraordinarily radiated the Christian virtues and the grace of the Holy Spirit as to make of him a pillar of true Orthodoxy and an example of Christian life that is of universal significance. In Archbishop John there were united three kinds of the highest Christian activity that are rarely found together: that of a bold and esteemed Prince of the Church; an ascetic in the tradition of the pillar-saints, taking upon himself the severest self-mortification; and a fool for Christ's sake, instructing men by a "foolishness" that was beyond the wisdom of this world.

The following account cannot begin to be called a complete life of Archbishop John; it is only a selection of the material that is already available, presented in the form of a preliminary sketch of the life of this holy

* This Life was written in 1966.

man. It was compiled by the St. Herman Brotherhood, which was organized with the blessing of Archbishop John (who wished to see Father Herman canonized after Father John of Kronstadt) for the mission of the printed word. Now, in fulfillment of this mission, it is our duty to speak the truth about this man who was, in our dark times when genuine Christianity has almost vanished, an embodiment of the life in Christ.

The account is based primarily upon personal acquaintance and upon the testimony of witnesses known to the compilers. Archbishop John throughout is referred to by the term Russians use to speak of and address bishops: *Vladika*. In English this is rendered "Master," but the Russian word, when used by itself, implies a familiarity and endearment that are wanting in the nearest English equivalent. For those who knew him, Archbishop John will always be simply *Vladika*.

I

Archbishop John was born on June 4, 1896, in the village of Adamovka in the province of Kharkov in southern Russia. He was a member of the Little Russian noble family of Maximovitch, to which St. John of Tobolsk also had belonged. His father, Boris, was a marshal of nobility in one part of Kharkov province; and his uncle was rector of Kiev University. He received at baptism the name of Michael, his heavenly protector being the Archangel Michael. He was a sickly child and ate little.

He received his secondary education in the Poltava Military School, which he attended from 1907 to 1914. He loved this school and remembered it fondly in later years. Upon completing military school he entered Kharkov Imperial University in the faculty of law, from which he graduated in 1918, before it was seized by the Soviets. He was then assigned to the Kharkov District Court, where he served at the time Hetman Skoropadsky was ruling the Ukraine and while the Volunteer Army was there.

Kharkov, where Vladika spent his formative years, was a true town of Holy Russia, and the young Michael, impressionable to revelations of holiness, acquired there the pattern of his future life. There were two miraculous Icons of the Mother of God, the *Oseryanskaya* and *Eletskaya*, which were carried in a religious procession twice a year from the monasteries where they were treasured to the Dormition Cathedral. In the Protection Monastery, in a frescoed grotto underneath the altar, lay the remains of the holy Archbishop Melety Leontovitch, who after his death in 1841 rendered miraculous help to those who served a panikhida for him at his coffin. Even during his lifetime the Archbishop was venerated for his severe asceticism, especially for the ascetic feat of abstaining from sleep. He was known to spend nights on end standing motionless, with lifted arms, deep in prayer. He foreknew the day and the hour of his own death. The young Maximovitch was known to have a veneration for this holy hierarch.

Today Archbishop John may be seen to resemble the holy man of Kharkov in at least three respects: he was known not to have slept in a bed for forty years; he knew beforehand of his death; and he now rests under a cathedral in a special grave-chapel where panikhidas are sung almost daily and the psalter is read over his coffin by those who ask for his help. This is a unique case of the transplanting, as it were, of a part of Holy Russia to contemporary America.

While at Kharkov University, Vladika spent more time reading the Lives of the Saints than attending classes; nonetheless he was an excellent student. Evidently his emulation of saints was apparent even at that age, since Archbishop Anthony of Kharkov, one of the great Church figures of that time (later Metropolitan, first candidate to the Patriarchal See of Moscow, and first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad) took special pains to become acquainted with him, and then kept the youth close to him and guided his spiritual formation.

In 1921, during the Russian Civil War, Vladika, together with his parents, his brothers, and his sister, was evacuated to Belgrade, where he and his brothers entered the University of Belgrade. One brother graduated in the technical faculty and became an engineer, the other graduated in law and served in the Yugoslav police. Vladika himself graduated in 1925 in the faculty of theology. While he was a student he worked for his living by selling newspapers.

In 1924 Vladika was ordained reader in the Russian church in Belgrade by Metropolitan Anthony, who continued to exert great influence over him; and Vladika in his turn showed the utmost respect and devotion to his superior. In 1926 Metropolitan Anthony tonsured him a monk and ordained him hierodeacon in the Milkov Monastery, giving him the name John, after Vladika's own distant relative, Saint John Maximovitch of Tobolsk. On November 21 of the same year Vladika was ordained hieromonk by Bishop Gabriel of Chelyabinsk.

From 1925 to 1927, Vladika was an instructor of religion at the Serbian State High School, and from 1929 to 1934 he was a teacher and tutor at the Serbian Seminary of St. John the Theologian at Bitol. There he served the Divine Liturgy in Greek for the local Greek and Macedonian communities, who had the greatest esteem for him.

The city of Bitol was in the diocese of Okhrida, and at that time the ruling bishop of this diocese was Nicholas Velimirovitch—a Serbian Chrysostom, a noted preacher, poet, writer, and organizer and inspirer of the popular religious movement. He, as much as Metropolitan Anthony, valued and loved the young Hieromonk John, and himself exerted a beneficial influence upon him. More than once he was heard to say, "If you wish to see a living saint, go to Bitol to Father John."

For, indeed, it began to become evident that this was an entirely extraordinary man. It was his own students who first discovered

what was perhaps Vladika's greatest feat of asceticism. They noticed at first that he stayed up long after everyone else had gone to bed; he would go through the dormitories at night and pick up blankets that had fallen down and cover the unsuspecting sleepers, making the Sign of the Cross over them. Finally it was discovered that he scarcely slept at all, and never in a bed, allowing himself only an hour or two each night of uncomfortable rest in a sitting position, or bent over on the floor praying before icons. Years afterward he himself admitted that since taking the monastic vows he had not slept lying in a bed. Such an ascetic practice is a very rare one; and yet it is not unknown to Orthodox tradition. The great 4th-century founder of coenobitic monasticism, St. Pachomius the Great, when receiving the Rule of monastic communal life from an angel, heard the following concerning sleep: "And they (the monks) shall not take their sleep lying down, but thou shalt make them seats so that when they are sitting down they shall be able to support their heads" (Rule 4).

Archbishop Averky of the Jordanville Holy Trinity Monastery, then a young hieromonk in Carpatho-Russia, was a witness of the deep impression Hieromonk John made upon the seminary students. When they returned home on vacations they would speak of their extraordinary instructor who prayed constantly, served the Divine Liturgy or at least received Holy Communion every day, fasted strictly, never slept lying down, and with true fatherly love inspired them with the

high ideals of Christianity and of Holy Russia (*Orthodox Russia*, 1966, no. 14).

In 1934 it was decided to raise Hieromonk John to the rank of bishop. As for Vladika himself, nothing was farther from his mind. A lady who knew him relates how she met him at this time on a streetcar in Belgrade. He told her that he was in town by mistake, having been sent for in place of some other Hieromonk John who was to be consecrated bishop! When she saw him the next day he informed her that the situation was worse than he had thought: it was *him* they wished to make bishop! When he had protested that this was out of the question, since he had a speech defect and could not enunciate clearly, he had only been told that the Prophet Moses had had the same difficulty.

The consecration occurred on May 28, 1934. Vladika was the last bishop of the very many to be consecrated by Metropolitan Anthony, and the extraordinarily high esteem in which that venerable hierarch held the new bishop is indicated in a letter which he sent to Archbishop Dimitry in the Far East. Himself declining an invitation to retire to China, he wrote: "...But in place of myself, as my soul, as my heart, I am sending you Vladika Bishop John. This little, frail man, looking almost like a child, is in actuality a miracle of ascetic firmness and strictness in our time of total spiritual enfeeblement" (*Orthodox Russia*, 1966, no. 13).

Vladika was assigned to the diocese of Shanghai.

II

Vladika arrived in Shanghai in late November, on the Feast of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple, and found a large cathedral uncompleted and a jurisdictional conflict to resolve. The first thing he did was to restore Church unity. He established contact with Serbs, Greeks, Ukrainians. He paid special attention to religious education and made it a rule to be present at the oral examinations of the catechism classes in all the Orthodox schools in Shanghai. He at once became a protector of various charitable and philanthropic societies and actively participated in their work, especially after seeing the needy circumstances in which the majority of his flock, refugees from the Soviet Union, were placed. He never went visiting for tea to the rich, but he was to be seen wherever there was need, regardless of times and weather. He organized a home for orphans and the children of needy parents, entrusting it to the heavenly protection of a Saint he highly venerated, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, who loved children. Vladika himself gathered sick and starving children off the streets and dark alleys of Shanghai's slums. Beginning with eight children, the orphanage later housed up to a hundred children at one time, and some 3500 in all. When the Communists came, Vladika evacuated the whole orphanage, first to an island in the Philippines, and then to America.

It soon became apparent to his new flock that Vladika was a great ascetic. The

core of his asceticism was prayer and fasting. He ate once a day at 11 p.m. During the first and last weeks of Great Lent he did not eat at all, and for the rest of this and the Christmas Lent he ate only bread from the altar. His nights he spent usually in prayer, and when he finally became exhausted he would put his head on the floor and steal a few hours of sleep near dawn. When the time would come to serve Matins, someone would knock on the door, to no avail; they would open the door and find Vladika huddled on the floor in the icon-corner, overcome by sleep. At a tap on the shoulder he would jump up, and in a few minutes he would be in church for services—cold water streaming down his beard, but quite awake.

Vladika officiated in the cathedral every morning and evening, even when sick. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily, as he was to do for the rest of his life, and if for some reason he could not serve, he would still receive Holy Communion. No matter where he was, he would not miss a service. Once, according to a witness, "Vladika's leg was terribly swollen and the concilium of doctors, fearing gangrene, prescribed immediate hospitalization, which Vladika categorically refused. Then the Russian doctors informed the Parish Council that they released themselves of any responsibility for the health and even the life of the patient. The members of the Parish Council, after long pleas for mercy and threats of taking him by force, compelled Vladika to agree, and he was sent to the Russian Hospital in the morning of the

day before the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. By six o'clock, however, Vladika came limping to the cathedral on foot and served. In a day all the swelling was gone."*

Vladika's constant attention to self-mortification had its root in the *fear of God*, which he possessed in the tradition of the ancient Church and of Holy Russia. The following incident, told by O. Skopichenko and confirmed by many from Shanghai, well illustrates his daring, unshakeable faith in Christ. "A Mrs. Menshikova was bitten by a mad dog. The injections against rabies she either refused to take or took carelessly.... And then she came down with this terrible disease. Bishop John found out about it and came to the dying woman. He gave her Holy Communion, but just then she began having one of the fits of this disease; she began to foam at the mouth, and at the same time she spit out the Holy Gifts which she had just received. The Holy Sacrament cannot be thrown out. And Vladika picked up and put in his mouth the Holy Gifts vomited by the sick woman. Those who were with him exclaimed: 'Vladika, what are you doing! Rabies is terribly contagious!' But Vladika peacefully answered: 'Nothing will happen; these are the Holy Gifts.' And indeed nothing did happen."

Vladika wore clothing of the cheapest Chinese fabric, and soft slippers or sandals, always without socks no matter what the wea-

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* G. Larin, in Archimandrite Veniamin's *Recollections of Archbishop John*, Strathfield, Australia, 1966, p. 10.

ther. He often went barefoot, sometimes after having given his sandals away to some poor man. He even served barefoot, for which he was severely criticized.

By now it had become known that Vladika not only was a righteous man and an ascetic, but was also so close to God that he was endowed with the gift of clairvoyance and there were healings by his prayers. A striking account told by an eyewitness, Lidia Liu, testifies to Vladika's spiritual height. "Vladika came to Hong Kong twice. It's strange, but I, not knowing Vladika then, wrote him a letter asking him to help a widow with children, and I also asked him about some personal spiritual matter, but I never received an answer. A year passed. Vladika came to Hong Kong and I was in a crowd that went to meet him in church. Vladika turned to me and said, 'It is you who wrote me the letter!' I was astonished, since Vladika had never seen me before.

"A moleben was sung, after which Vladika, standing before a lectern, was delivering a sermon. I was standing next to my mother, and we both saw a light surrounding Vladika down to the lectern—a radiance around him a foot wide. This lasted a rather long time. When the sermon was over, I, struck by such an unusual phenomenon, told what we had seen to R.V.S., who told us: 'Yes, many faithful saw it.' My husband, who was standing a little way off, also saw this light."

Vladika loved to visit the sick and did it every single day, hearing confessions and

giving Holy Communion. If the condition of a patient should become critical, Vladika would go to him at any hour of the day or night to pray at his bedside. Here is one undoubted miracle among the many worked by Vladika's prayers; it was recorded and placed in the archives of the County Hospital in Shanghai (source: N. Makovaya).

"L.D. Sadkovskaya was very much taken by the sport of horse racing. Once she was thrown off her horse; she hit her head on a rock and lost consciousness. She was brought to the hospital unconscious. A concilium of doctors agreed that her condition was hopeless and it was not likely that she would live until morning. The pulse was almost gone; the skull was fractured in places so that small pieces of the skull were pressing on the brain. In such a condition she would die on the operating table. Even if her heart would tolerate surgery and the result were successful, she would still remain deaf, dumb, and blind.

"Her sister, after hearing all this, rushed to Bishop John in despair and begged him to save her sister. Vladika agreed: he came to the hospital and asked everyone to leave the room and prayed there for about two hours. Then he called the chief doctor and asked him to examine her again. How surprised the doctor was to discover that her pulse was normal! He agreed to perform the operation immediately, but only in the presence of Bishop John. The operation was successful, and the doctors were amazed when, after the operation, the patient regained con-

sciousness and asked to drink. She can see and hear perfectly. She is still living and can talk, see, and hear. I have known her for thirty years."

Vladika visited the prison also, and celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the convicts on a primitive little table. But the most difficult task for a pastor is to visit the mentally ill and the possessed—and Vladika sharply distinguished between the two. Outside Shanghai there was a mental hospital, and Vladika alone had the spiritual power to visit these terribly sick people. He gave them Holy Communion, and they, surprisingly, received it peacefully and listened to him. They always looked forward to his visits and met him with joy.

Vladika possessed great courage. During the Japanese occupation the Japanese authorities tried in every way possible to bend the Russian colony to their will. Pressure was directed through the heads of the Russian Emigrant Committee. Two presidents of this Committee strove to maintain its independence, and as a result both were killed. Confusion and terror seized the Russian colony, and at that moment Vladika John, in spite of warnings from the Russians who were collaborating with the Japanese, declared himself the temporary head of the Russian colony.

During the Japanese occupation it was extremely dangerous to walk on the streets at night, and most people took care to be home by dark. Vladika, however, paying no heed to the danger, continued to visit the sick and needy at any hour of the night, and he was never touched.

At the end of the war persuasion and pressure were brought to bear on Russian clergy everywhere to submit to the newly-elected "Patriarch" of the Soviet Church. Of the six hierarchs in the Far East, five submitted; only Bishop John, resisting all persuasions and threats, remained loyal to the Russian Church Abroad. In 1946 he was raised to the rank of Archbishop over all the Russian faithful in China.

With the coming of the Communists, the Russians in China were forced once again to flee, most of them through the Philippine Islands. In 1949 approximately 5000 Refugees from the Chinese mainland were living in an International refugee Organization camp on the island of Tubabao in the Philippines. This island is located in the path of the seasonal typhoons which sweep through that part of the Pacific. During the 27-month period of the camp's occupancy, the island was threatened only once by a typhoon, and it changed course and bypassed the island.

When the fear of typhoons was mentioned by one Russian to the Filipinos, they replied that there was no reason to worry, because "your holy man blesses your camp from four directions every night." They referred to Vladika John; for no typhoon struck the island while he was there. After the camp had been almost totally evacuated and the people resettled elsewhere (mainly in the U.S.A. and Australia), and only about 200 persons were left on the island, it was struck by a terrible typhoon that totally destroyed the camp.

Vladika himself went to Washington, D.C., to get his people to America. Legislation was changed and almost the whole camp came to the New World—thanks again to Vladika.

III

The exodus of his flock from China accomplished, Archbishop John was given in 1951 a new field for his pastoral endeavor: he was sent by the Synod of Bishops to the Archdiocese of Western Europe, with his see first in Paris, and later in Brussels. He was now one of the leading hierarchs of the Russian Church, and his attendance was frequently required at the sessions of the Synod in New York City.

In Western Europe Vladika took a deep interest not only in the Russians in diaspora, for whom he exerted himself tirelessly in labors similar to those for which he had been known in Shanghai, but also in the local inhabitants. He received under his jurisdiction local Dutch and French Orthodox Churches, protecting them and encouraging their Orthodox development. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Dutch and French, as before he had served in Greek and Chinese, and as later he was to serve in English.

Vladika's interest in and devotion to the Church's Saints, of whom his knowledge was already seemingly limitless, was extended now to Western European Saints dating from before the schism of the Latin Church, many of whom, venerated only locally, were included in no Orthodox calendar of Saints. He collected their Lives and images of them,

and later submitted a long list of them to the Synod.

In Western Europe as in China people learned to expect the unexpected of Vladika; for here he continued to base his life upon the law of God, thinking nothing of the inconvenience or surprise this might sometimes occasion in those who are governed chiefly by the standards of men. Once Vladika chanced to be in Marseilles, and he decided to serve a panikhida on the site of the cruel assasination of King Alexander of Serbia. None of his clergy, out of false shame, wished to serve with Vladika. Indeed, what a thing to do—to serve in the middle of the street! So Vladika went alone. The citizens of Marseilles were amazed to see a clergyman in unusual dress, with long hair and beard, walking with a suitcase and a broom in the middle of the street. News photographers caught sight of him and photographed him. Finally he stopped, swept with the broom a small portion of the pavement, opened his suitcase and began taking out its contents. On the swept spot he put a pontifical eagle-rug, lit the censer, and began to serve a panikhida.

Vladika's reputation for holiness, too, spread among the non-Orthodox as well as the Orthodox population. In one of the Catholic churches of Paris, a priest strove to inspire his young people with these words: "You demand proofs, you say that now there are neither miracles nor saints. Why should I give you theoretical proofs, when today there walks in the streets of Paris a Saint—*Saint Jean Nus Pieds* (Saint John the Barefoot)."

Many people testify to the miracles worked by the prayers of Archbishop John in Western Europe.

IV

In San Francisco, whose cathedral parish is the largest in the Russian Church Abroad, a life-long friend of Vladika, Archbishop Tikhon, retired because of ill-health, and in his absence the construction of a great new cathedral came to a halt as a bitter dispute paralyzed the Russian community. In response to the urgent request of thousands of Russians in San Francisco who had known him in Shanghai, Archbishop John was sent by the Synod in 1962 as the only hierarch likely to restore peace in the divided community. He arrived at his last assignment as bishop twenty-eight years to the day after his first arrival in Shanghai: on the feast of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple, November 21 (December 4), 1962.

Under Vladika's guidance a measure of peace was restored, the paralysis of the community was ended, and the cathedral finished. Yet even in the role of peacemaker Vladika was attacked, and accusations and slanders were heaped upon his head. He was forced to appear in public court—in flagrant violation of church canons—to answer to preposterous charges of concealing financial dishonesty by the Parish Council. All involved were completely exonerated; but thus Vladika's last years were filled with the bitterness of slander and persecution, to which he unfailingly replied without complaint, without

judging anyone, with undisturbed peacefulness.

Vladika remained true to the end to his path of faithful service to the Church. To those who knew him in his last years perhaps two aspects of his character stood out. First was his strictness in what regarded the Church and the law of God. He insisted on the proper deportment of Church servers, allowing no levity, or even talking, in the altar. Himself an expert in Divine services, he would correct errors and omissions in the order of service immediately. With the congregation, too, he was strict, allowing no women to kiss the cross or icons while wearing lipstick, and requiring that the antidoron distributed at the end of the Liturgy be received fasting. He spoke against the desecration of the eves of Sundays and feast days by the organization of balls and other entertainments on them. He staunchly defended the Church (Julian) Calendar against new-calendar innovators. He forbade his clergy to participate in "Pan-Orthodox" services because of the dubious canonicity of some participants; and the activities of Orthodox "ecumenists" caused him to shake his head in disbelief. He was strictest of all with regard to the holy doctrine of Orthodoxy; while he was still a young bishop in Shanghai his critical essay on the "Sophiology" of Archpriest S.N. Bulgakov was instrumental in the Synod's condemnation of the latter's heresy in 1936. No one who has seen will soon forget Vladika's fierce look while lowering the pontifical candlesticks at the proclamation of the *Anath-*

emas against heretics on the Sunday of Orthodoxy—here he was one with the Church in excluding from her bosom all who reject the full and saving Orthodox faith. All this was not from any narrow-minded literalness or "fanaticism," but from the same *fear of God* which Vladika preserved his whole life long, and which prohibits one from trespassing against God's law at the peril of one's salvation.

A recent example of Vladika's righteous severity invites comparison with an incident from the life of Vladika's beloved St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, who rode into the midst of a pagan celebration held during the Apostles' Fast and delivered a heated accusing sermon against the participants (see *The Orthodox Word*, vol. 2, no. 3, p. 87). On the evening before October 19 (Nov. 2), 1964, the Russian Church Abroad celebrated the solemn canonization of Father John of Kronstadt, whom Vladika greatly venerated, taking an active part in the compiling of the service and akathist to him. The Latins celebrate on this day the feast of All Saints, and there is a tradition that during the preceding night the dark spirits celebrated their own festival of disorder. In America this "Halloween" has become an occasion on which children make mischief dressed in costumes of witches, devils, ghosts, as if calling on the dark powers—a diabolic mockery of Christianity.

A group of Russians organized on this night (which was also the eve of Sunday) a Halloween Ball. In the San Francisco Cathedral at the time of the first All-night Vigil

celebrated to St. John of Kronstadt, a number of people were absent, to the great sorrow of Vladika. After the service Vladika went to the place where the ball was still in progress. He climbed the steps and entered the hall, to the absolute astonishment of the participants. The music stopped and Vladika, in complete silence, glared at the dumbfounded people, slowly and deliberately making the round of the entire hall, staff in hand. He spoke not a word, and none was necessary; the mere sight of Vladika stung the conscience of all, as was evident from the general consternation. Vladika left in silence; and the next day in church he thundered his holy indignation and his flaming zeal calling all to the devout Christian life.

Yet Vladika is not best remembered by his flock for his sternness, but rather for his gentleness, his joyfulness, even for what is known as "foolishness for Christ's sake." The most popular photograph of him captures something of this aspect of his character. It was especially noticeable in his conduct with children. After services he would smile and joke with the boys who served with him, playfully knocking the refractory on the head with his staff. Occasionally the Cathedral clergy would be disconcerted to see Vladika, In the middle of a service (though never in the altar), bend over to play with a small child! And on feast days when blessing with holy water was called for, he would sprinkle the faithful, not on the top of the head as is usual, but right in the face (which once led a small girl to exclaim, "he *squirts* you"),

with a noticeable glint in his eye and total unconcern at the discomfiture of some of the more dignified. Children were absolutely devoted to him, despite his usual strictness with them.

Vladika was sometimes criticized for upsetting the usual order of things. He was often late for services (never on his own account, but because he had been visiting the sick or dying), and he would not allow them to begin without him; and when he celebrated the services would be quite long, as he allowed few of the standard abbreviations. He would appear at various places unannounced and at unexpected times; often he would visit hospitals late at night—and always be admitted. At times his judgments would seem to clash with common sense, and his actions would seem strange; and often he would not explain them.

No man is perfect; Vladika was sometimes wrong (and he did not hesitate to admit it when he found out). But usually he was right, and the seeming strangeness of some of his actions and judgments could later be seen to fit into a different pattern of things. Vladika's life was governed by the standards of the spiritual life, and if this upset the routine order of things it was in order to jolt people out of their spiritual inertia and remind them that there is a higher judgment than the world's.

A remarkable incident from Vladika's years in San Francisco (1963) illustrates several aspects of his holiness: his spiritual boldness based on absolute faith; his ability

to see the future and to overcome by his spiritual sight the bounds of space; and the power of his prayer, which beyond all doubt worked miracles. The incident is related by the woman who witnessed it, Mrs. L. Liu, the exact words of Vladika were confirmed by the Mr. T. who is mentioned.

"In San Francisco my husband was involved in an automobile accident and was seriously injured; he lost control of balance and suffered terribly. At this time Vladika had many troubles. Knowing the power of Vladika's prayers, I thought: if I ask Vladika to come to my husband, my husband would recover; but I was afraid to do this because Vladika was so busy then. Two days passed, and suddenly Vladika came to us, accompanied by Mr. B.T., who had driven him. Vladika stayed with us about five minutes, but I believed that my husband would recover. The state of his health was at its most serious point then, and after Vladika's visit there was a sharp crisis and then he began to recover and lived four more years after this. He was quite aged. Afterwards I met Mr. T. at a Church meeting and he told me that he had been driving Vladika to the airport. Suddenly Vladika had said to him: 'Let's go now to the Liu's. He had objected that they would be late for the plane and that he could not turn around at that moment. Then Vladika had said: 'Can you take the life of a man upon yourself?' He could do nothing but drive Vladika to us. Vladika, as it turned out, was not late for the plane, because they had held it up for him."

With the announcement by Metropolitan Anastassy in 1964 of his retirement, Archbishop John became a leading candidate to succeed him as Metropolitan and Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad. On the second ballot he was one of the two candidates, with the difference of a single vote between them. To resolve the equal division of the bishops, that night Vladika asked the youngest of the hierarchs, Bishop Philaret, to his quarters, and there he persuaded this unexpected candidate to accept the awesome responsibility of this office. The next day he withdrew his own candidacy and recommended the election of Bishop Philaret, whom the bishops elected unanimously, seeing in this sudden turn of events the grace of the Holy Spirit.

To such eminence among the hierarchs of the Russian Church was Vladika raised before the end of his earthly life. It was an eminence based not on any external qualities, for Vladika was frail, bent, without ambition or guile, unable even to speak clearly. It was an eminence based solely on those inner, spiritual qualities which made of him unquestionably one of the great Orthodox hierarchs of this century, and a holy man. In him, righteousness shone.

V

Among those who knew and loved Vladika, the first response to the news of his sudden death was: it cannot be! And this was more than a reaction to the suddenness of the event; for among those who were close to him there had unaccountably developed the notion

that this pillar of the Church, this holy man who was always accessible to his flock—would never cease to be! There would never be a time when one would not be able to turn to him for advice and consolation! In one sense, in a spiritual sense, this has since turned out to be true. But it is also one of the realities of this world that every man who lives must die.

Vladika was prepared for this reality. While others expected of him many more years of fruitful service to the Church of Christ—for he was a relatively young hierarch—he was readying himself for an end which he had foreseen at least for some months, and the very day of which he apparently knew in advance.

To the manager of the orphanage where he lived, who had spoken in the spring of 1966 of a diocesan meeting to be held three years later, he indicated, "I will not be here then." In May, 1966, a woman who had known Vladika for twelve years—and whose testimony, according to Metropolitan Philaret, is "worthy of complete confidence"—was amazed to hear him say, "I will die soon, at the end of June...not in San Francisco, but in Seattle...." Metropolitan Philaret himself testifies of Vladika's extraordinary final farewell to him when returning to San Francisco from the last session of the Synod which he attended in New York. After the Metropolitan had served the customary moleben before traveling, Vladika, instead of sprinkling his own head with holy water, as is always done by hierarchs, bent low and asked the Metropolitan to sprin-

kle him; and after this, instead of the usual mutual kissing of hands, Vladika firmly took the Metropolitan's hand and kissed it, withdrawing his own (see *Orthodox Russia*, 1966, no. 18.)

Again, on the evening before his departure for Seattle, four days before his death, Vladika astonished a man for whom he had just served a moleben with the words, "You will not kiss my hand again." And on the day of his death, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy which he celebrated, he spent three hours in the altar praying, emerging not long before his death, which occurred at 3:50 p.m. on July 2 (June 19, OS), 1966. He died in his room in the parish building next to the church, without preparatory signs of any illness or affliction. He was heard to fall and, having been placed in a chair by those who ran to help him, breathed his last peacefully and with little evident pain, in the presence of the miracle-working Kursk Icon of the Sign. Thus was Vladika found worthy to imitate the blessed death of his patron, St. John of Tobolsk.

Today Archbishop John reposes in a chapel in the basement of the San Francisco cathedral; and there a new chapter has begun in the story of this holy man. Just as St. Seraphim of Sarov told his spiritual children to regard him as living after his death, and to come to his grave and tell him what was in their hearts, so our Vladika also has proved to be hearing those who revere his memory. Soon after his death a one-time student of his, Fr. Amvrossy P., saw one

night a dream (or a vision, he could not tell which): Vladika, clad in Easter vestments, full of light and shining, was censing the cathedral and joyfully uttered to him just one word while blessing him: "happy."

Later, before the end of the forty-day period, Fr. Constantine Z., long Vladika's deacon and now a priest, who had lately been angry at Vladika and had begun to doubt his righteousness, saw Vladika in a dream all in light, with rays of light shining around his head so brightly that it was impossible to look at them. Thus were Fr. Constantine's doubts of Vladika's holiness dispelled.

Many others have seen Archbishop John in unusual dreams that have a particular significance or message. Some affirm that supernatural help has been granted them. The modest grave-chapel, soon to be adorned with icons by Pimen Sofronov in remembrance of Vladika, is the witness already of how many tears, confessions, heartfelt requests....

The manager of the St. Tikhon Zadonsky Home and long a devoted servant of Vladika, M. A. Shakmatova, saw a remarkable dream. A crowd of people carried Vladika in a coffin into St. Tikhon's Church; Vladika came to life and stood in the royal doors anointing the people and saying to her, "Tell the people: although I have died, I am alive!"

It is yet too early to be able even to grasp the fact that we, cold and sinful, living in this evil age, have been witnesses of such a glorious phenomenon—the life and death of a saint! It is as if the times of Holy Russia have returned to earth, as if to prove the

fact that *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday, and today, and forever* (Heb. 13:8). Amen.

Eugene Rose
1966

Chapter 3
Childhood
1896-1911

The birthplace of Archbishop John was the warm, blossoming land of the Kharkov region in southern Russia. Here, in the estate of Adamovka, in the illustrious noble family of Maximovitch, on June 4, 1896, a son was born to the parents Boris and Glafira. In holy Baptism he was named Michael, in honor of the holy Archangel of God. From of old the Maximovitch family had been famous throughout Russia for its piety and patriotism. The most illustrious member of this family was a Saint glorified by the Church, the holy Hierarch John, Metropolitan of Tobolsk, a well-known spiritual writer and poet, translator of the *Heliotropion, or Coordination of the Human Will with the Divine Will*, missionary to Siberia who sent the first Orthodox Mission to China, and who, especially after his repose, poured forth a multitude of miracles for the faithful. He was canonized in 1916, and his incorrupt relics are preserved even to this day in Tobolsk. Although the

holy Hierarch John died at the beginning of the 18th century, yet his spirit rested on his distant nephew, who was to receive his name in monasticism, and the young Michael (or Misha, as he was called for short) from earliest childhood was a remarkable boy.

Misha's grandfather on his father's side was a prominent landowner of the area, and his grandfather on his mother's side was a doctor in Kharkov. His father held a position of leadership among the nobility, and his uncle (his father's brother), who edited the *Heliotropion* of St. John of Tobolsk, was Rector of the University of Kiev; a similar worldly career seemed to be in store for the boy Michael also. His relationship to his parents was always excellent, and he took their opinions into serious consideration as long as they lived. They died in Venezuela, his mother in 1952, and his father in 1954.

As a boy Misha Maximovitch was sickly and ate little. He was very quiet and gentle. He strove to be on good terms with everyone, but he had no especially close friends. He loved animals, and dogs in particular. He did not like noisy children's games and was often in a very pensive frame of mind.

The outstanding characteristic of his childhood was his deep religiousness, which he manifested in ways far beyond his years. In his sermon on being consecrated Bishop in 1934, he himself said: "From the first days when I began to become aware of myself, I wished to serve righteousness and truth. My parents kindled in me a striving to stand unwaveringly for the truth, and my soul was

captivated by the example of those who had given their lives for it."

Young Misha loved to "play monastery," dressing toy soldiers as monks and making toy forts into monasteries. As he grew older, his religious fervor deepened. He collected icons and religious and historical books, amassing a large library, and he loved above all to read the Lives of Saints. At night he would stand for a long time at prayer. Being the oldest child, he had a great influence on his four brothers and one sister, who knew the Lives of Saints and the facts of Russian history through him. He was very demanding of himself and others in keeping the Church's laws and national customs. From his earliest years he was a fervent Russian patriot, and he instilled in others also a reverence for Russia and its history. His love extended likewise to all the Slavic and Orthodox peoples, and in 1912, when the Serbs were betrayed by the Bulgarians, in righteous indignation he removed the pictures of the Bulgarian king from the younger children's scrapbooks and sealed up the family's phonograph record of the Bulgarian national anthem so that it could not be played.

Misha's holy and righteous childhood greatly impressed his French Catholic governess, and it was under his influence that she was baptized Orthodox when the boy was fifteen years old. He helped to prepare her for baptism and taught her how to pray. He took an active part in church life, and every year he would participate in the procession of the Wonderworking Ozeryansk Icon of the Most

Holy Mother of God from Kharkov to the Ozeryansk Monastery.

The Maximovitch country estate in Bare Valley was located only eight miles from the famous Sviatogorsk Monastery. The family spent every summer at their estate, and young Misha would sleep outdoors in a tent. The family had great reverence for the Monastery and spent much time there. It can be imagined what awe and fervor was inspired in Misha's eager heart when he came as a pilgrim to this remarkable Monastery, which was situated on a forested bank of the Northern Donets. It had an Athonite Typicon, majestic churches, a high "Mount Tabor," many caves, schema-monks, sketes, and a large brotherhood of 600 monks—enough to inflame the zeal of any young lover of the Lives of Saints. Misha, a "monk from childhood," was immensely impressed, and he would often come to the monastery by himself.

When he was eleven years old, Misha was sent to the Poltava Cadet Corps (Military Academy), which his father had attended. Here he continued to be quiet and religious and not at all like a soldier. He did well in all subjects and liked them all, with the exception of physical education, from which he was excused in his last years.

During these years away from home, which usually are so crucial for young impressionable souls, he could not avoid meeting the new Poltava Bishop, who struck the whole town with his severe asceticism. Bishop Theophan Bistrov was short in stature, very thin, "transparent" as people

used to describe him. He served with closed eyes in almost motionless stillness and evoked a deep feeling of spirituality. It seemed as though an icon of a Saint came down from the frescoed walls of the cathedral and walked amidst the faithful. He spoke very softly, always in a state of concentrated prayer, yet quite accessible, especially to the youth. It is interesting to note that there was a strong similarity in Blessed John's late years, as if Hierarch Theophan was his model of an ascetic prelate that had so deeply impressed him since childhood.

While he was attending the Cadet Corps, at the age of 13, Misha was guilty of a serious "breach of conduct" which is extremely revealing of his character as a boy. The Cadets would often march formally in the city of Poltava, and in 1909, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Russian victory in the Battle of Poltava, they were marching with special solemnity. As they passed by the front of the Poltava Cathedral, Cadet Michael turned toward the Cathedral—and made the sign of the Cross! The boys laughed, and later they mocked him for this; and he was disciplined by the authorities for it. Finally the Grand Prince Constantine Constantinovitch, patron of the corps, whose son was a fellow cadet of Misha's, issued the order that Cadet Michael Maximovitch was not to be punished for an act which, far from being reprehensible and deserving of censure, was most praiseworthy and revealed sound religious feelings. Misha, from an object of ridicule, became a hero.

In 1914 Michael graduated from the Cadet Corps and, following the deep desire of his heart, he wished then to attend the Kiev Theological Academy. His parents insisted, however, that he attend Law School in Kharkov, and out of obedience to them he put away his own desire and began to prepare for a career in Law.

It was during his university years that the Orthodox education and outlook which he had received in his childhood came to maturity in the youth Michael. At an age when some boys who are raised *unconsciously* Orthodox are "rebelling" or even discarding the "fairy tales" of their religious upbringing, young Michael understood the point of this upbringing; he saw that the Lives of Saints, in particular, contain a profound wisdom which is unsuspected by those who read them superficially, and that the proper knowledge of them is more important than any university course. And so it was, as his classmates noticed, that Michael spent more time reading the Lives of the Saints than attending academic lectures, although he did very well in his university studies also. He studied the Orthodox Saints precisely "on the university level": he assimilated their world-outlook and their orientation toward life, entered into their psychology, studied the variety of their activity and ascetic labors and practice of prayer. He came to love them with all his heart, was thoroughly penetrated by their spirit—and began to live like them. "While studying the worldly sciences," he said in the sermon mentioned above, "I went all the more deeply into the study of

the science of sciences, into the study of the spiritual life." He put all his efforts into this, and his spiritual eyes became fully open and his soul was wounded with the thirst to acquire the true meaning and path of life in Christ.

The boy Michael came to the age of a man and finished his university studies just as the fearful Revolution was beginning its course with the intent to subject the whole world to anti-Christainity. His whole family was intensely loyal to the Orthodox Tsar, and for it the very first days of the February Revolution in 1917 were days of mourning. Michael, now thoroughly penetrated with the principles of Orthodox life according to the example of God's Saints, was especially bold in continuing to live by the standard of Orthodox sanctity even in the midst of the new conditions of life. Thus, at a Church meeting in Kharkov there was talk of taking down a silver bell in the cathedral belfry and melting it. The vast majority, caught up in the revolutionary spirit or fearful of opposing it, were in favor of this sacrilege, and only Michael and a very few others dared to speak out boldly against this. As the revolutionary spirit spread and the arrests began, his boldness became very dangerous, and his family tried to persuade him to leave home and hide himself. He only replied that there is nowhere to hide from God's will; without God's will nothing happens, not one hair falls from our head. He was arrested, then released after a month. After a short time he was arrested again, but when it was seen

that he seemed not to care whether he was free or in prison, he was soon released again. Already he quite literally lived in another world, and he simply refused to conform to the "reality" that governs the lives of most men; he had resolved to follow unwaveringly the path of God's law.

Thus, the seed of true Orthodoxy planted in his childhood took deep root in the soil of the heart of this chosen one of God, and his knowledge and love of the different kinds of Saints prepared his soul to become as it were a wondrous new plant, with marvellous and varied fruits seldom to be seen together in one person. As his later life revealed, he was at one and the same time a stern ascetic, and a loving pastor; a feeder of orphans and unmercenary healer, and a missionary and apostle; a profound theologian, and a fool for Christ's sake; a true shepherd of his banished Russian flock and a hierarch of universal significance.*

Fr. Herman
1979

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* The sources for this chapter are mostly from Archimandrite Spiridon (Efimov, +1984) as well as from the letters of his brother Constantine and sister Maria of Venezuela.

Chapter 4
Teacher at the Bitol Seminary, Yugoslavia
1929-1934
Reminiscences of a Seminarian

Remember your instructors, who have spoken unto you the word of God, and considering their end, follow their faith.
(Heb. 13:7)

Almost five decades have flown by* since the appearance at Bitol Seminary of a very modest monk. This was young Hieromonk John Maximovitch, who was Russian by origin. His outward appearance was not striking, but nonetheless was a little special. He was a man of medium stature with thick black hair which covered his shoulders. His face was without a single wrinkle, with large eyes

* These memoirs were first published in 1975, in the Serbian Journal *Pravoslavie* (Sept. 1). English translation in *Orthodox Life*, July-August, 1986.

which appeared as if looking out from the hair. He had not yet grown much beard. His nose was straight, but his lower jaw, as if taught, was an impediment to his speech. His right leg was shorter than the other, and he wore a prosthetic shoe which tapped as he walked, especially when he walked along the corridor or in the classroom. Often he used a cane. This is the way he appeared among us in the school year of 1928.

No one realized with what fullness the Holy Spirit dwelt within him. Undoubtedly by God's providence, he was indispensable at that time to the Bitol Seminary, which in its boarding school had from 400 to 500 students. Many students on scholarships lived in the boarding school until the fourth year of school, until they were given the possibility to choose either to finish seminary or go to some other school, retaining their scholarships. As a result, there were many students from different schools, most of whom were seminarians. There were many Albanians, fewer Russians and Czechs. From morning until evening it buzzed like a beehive. Among these youths and boys began to work this holy man who, with struggle, prayer and warm Christian love, created new people.

Ascetic Struggler

With the appearance of a new teacher among students, the question always arises, "What will he be like? Will he be strict or kind, etc.?" Probably there were these questions in relation to Fr. John. But he, by his personal example, very quickly answered

that he was strictest with himself. How many were his daily labors at prayer and prostrations only God knows, but we could only partly see and feel. The bishop of Ochrid, Nicholai Velimirovich, often visited the seminary and spoke with the teachers and students. For us his meeting with Fr. John was unusual. After mutual prostrations there was an unusually cordial, loving conversation. Once, before parting, he turned to a small group of students (of whom I was one) with these words: "Children, listen to Fr. John; he is an angel of God in human form." We ourselves became convinced that this was the correct characterization of him. His life was angelic. One can rightly say that he belonged more to heaven than to earth. His meekness and humility were like that recorded in the lives of the greatest ascetics and desert-dwellers. He ate only that amount of food which was indispensable to sustaining his body. His clothing was simple, and a bed he did not need. His room was situated on the basement level; it had one window without curtains, which looked into the depths of the courtyard. In his room was an ordinary table with a chair, and a bed on which he never lay. On his table always lay the Holy Gospel, and on a shelf stood the service books. That was all. At all times of the night he could be seen reading the Bible, because *his will is rather in the law of the Lord, and in His law will he meditate day and night* (Psalm 1:2).

The way in which he experienced all the church services and prayers is impossible

to convey in words. His preparations for holy Liturgy were extraordinary. From Thursday onwards he took less food. On Friday and Saturday he hardly ate, until, on Sunday, he served Liturgy.

The first week of Great Lent he did not eat, but every second day he served, likewise also during Passion Week. When Great Saturday arrived, his body was completely exhausted. But on the day of Christ's Resurrection he was revivified. After Divine Liturgy his strength returned. Angelic joy lit his face. In this way his ascetic life passed before our eyes.

A Man of Prayer with an Extraordinary Memory

Fr. John was a unique man of prayer. He was so absorbed in the meaning of the text of the prayers that the impression was created that he was talking with God, the Most Holy Theotokos, the angels and the saints. They were present to his spiritual eyes. It may be that for our benefit he spoke aloud to teach us how to pray. Every one of his prayers were vibrant; he spoke from memory with special expression. It is not known how many prayers he knew by heart. For him this was no miracle because he had a great gift from God, an unusual memory. This was discovered by all of us students as well as by all the teachers. Events from the Holy Gospel he knew as though he saw them before his own eyes, and he knew the chapter where they were to be found; when

necessary, he could even quote the verse. He knew the character and peculiarities of every student so that he could immediately tell when and how each student answered, what he knew and didn't know. All this he did without any notes. After many verifications no one could doubt his exceptional memory.

Mutual Love

Fr. John loved us all and we him. In our eyes he was the embodiment of all Christian virtues: quiet, calm, gentle. He glowed before our eyes. We saw in him no deficiency, even in the way he spoke; we quickly grew accustomed to that. He became for us so close that we considered him an older brother, loved and esteemed. There was no conflict, personal or public, which he could not resolve. There was no question without an answer. It was sufficient that someone pose a question on the street and he would immediately answer. If the question was rather important, he would answer it before a large gathering, after service in church, in class, or in the cafeteria. The answer was always concentrated, clear, full and knowledgeable, because he was a highly-learned man, having acquired two university degrees, Theology and Law. He daily and nightly prayed for us. Every night, like a guardian angel, he watched over us. For one he adjusted a pillow; for another, a blanket. Always, upon entering or leaving the room, he blessed us with the sign of the Cross.

Teacher

Finally, let us see what sort of teacher he was. He taught by a plan, a special method. He was at once a theorist and a practitioner. He combined practice and theory skillfully; because of this his subjects were retained without excessive reading. Let's recall, for instance, liturgics with church rules. He had a schedule by which students read in the kliros. One group of four students and another (altogether eight students), had to appear at the appointed time in Fr. John's room where all the service books were to be found. The first four students had to find everything that should be read or sung on that day or feast-day. The next four students listened. At this time the theory and symbolism of action, etc., was explained. In this way they practiced the entire year. In class the theory was emphasized. He demanded constant vigilance everywhere, especially during services. He wanted to attract students so that they would especially pay attention to the Holy Gospel as the source of all theological knowledge. Because of this, at the beginning of the lesson he asked what had been read that day from the Holy Gospel and Epistle. Everyone had to know because no one knew whom he would ask. After this he would give short explanations. What splendid explanations he gave when dealing with the subject of pastoral theology and the history of the

Christian Church! Some lectures on pastoral theology he wrote in special notebooks for us. In all of them he expressed himself best. By his convictions the priest is shown by the Apostle Paul as an ideal pastor who must be *an example for the faithful in word, in life, in spirit, in faith, in purity* (I Tim. 4:12).

A priest is the spiritual father of his parish; he must act in this way: his parish is a large family which cannot exist without pastoral love and daily prayer. Wherever possible he must come to help in order to partake of their joy and their sorrow. These are Fr. John's main thoughts which he explained in all his teachings.

Lessons on the history of the Christian Church likewise were well imprinted, because Fr. John knew how to select the most important points, often repeating until everyone remembered. When, in the year 1931, we were taking examinations for a certificate of graduation, Professor Dimitry Stefanovich, in the position of representative of the ministry, was amazed by the excellent answers of the students. I think more than half the students answered excellently, and the rest were very good. There were no poor grades. The teachers explained to the representative of the ministry that Fr. John was inseparable from his students, and during the whole year explained everything to the last detail.

And so Fr. John, by his exceptional personality, delved into the soul of each student. He was among us like one sent by God, delegated to work in His wide cornfield. He

honestly performed this, his mission, in my generation.

These memoirs refer to the period of time between 1928 and 1931. He stayed in the seminary until his election as bishop of Shanghai; because of this, I consider my memoirs incomplete.

Archpriest Urosh Maximovitch

Chapter 5
Wonderworker of Shanghai
1934-1951

In 1934 Hieromonk John of the Milkovo Monastery in Yugoslavia was consecrated bishop and sent to head the flock of Russian exiles in Shanghai. Here he soon became known as a loving pastor who gave himself entirely to his flock, refusing help to no one, and as a holy man whose prayer worked miracles. Later, with the approach of the Communists, by his intercessions with several governments and by his unceasing prayers, he rescued almost his entire flock, leading it through the Philippines to America and freedom. To this day most Russians who knew him remember him as "Vladika John of Shanghai." The following are but a few of the many accounts that relate to this period of his life, and that demonstrate beyond any doubt the power of his prayer with God.

I

Once in Shanghai Vladika John was asked to the bed of a dying child, whose case had been called hopeless by the physi-

cians. Entering the apartment, Vladika John went straight to the room in which the sick boy lay, although no one had managed yet to show him where this was. Without examining the child, Vladika immediately 'fell down' in front of the icon in the corner, which was very characteristic of him, and prayed for a long time. Then, assuring the relatives that the child would recover, he quickly left. And in fact the child became better towards morning and he soon recovered, so that a physician was no longer needed. An eyewitness, Colonel N.N. Nikolaev, confirms this account in all details.

Dr. A.F. Baranov (Erie, Pennsylvania)

II

Archbishop John has departed into the Heavenly Church. Now praying for the repose of his righteous soul one is involuntarily reminded of the words of the Gospel, *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good* (Luke 6: 45). Everyone who had the opportunity to have close contact with Hierarch John, will say with sincerity that the Hierarch always bore these words in his heart.

Once he told me, "Prayer is the foundation of the success of archpastoral activity. In the course of the day one must spend six hours conducting church services, six hours contemplating on God, six hours doing good deeds and six hours resting." He performed precisely that which would make him unusually firm, deeply humble and penetrating.

The Hierarch spent a lot of energy on children and young people. Thus he founded the orphanage of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, frequented all Russian educational institutions, constantly visited all classes of Religious Instruction, and personally conducted all examinations on that subject in all schools. An especially difficult task was the upbringing of the orphan children of the St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Orphanage.

He always used to say that the hardest emotional difficulties the orphans have are before great holidays like Christmas Eve and before Pascha, when the orphans see how Christian families prepare themselves for the feastdays, how fathers and mothers take care of their children—and they see that they don't have that. He always strove to be to them both father and mother.

The kind Hierarch, while raising children in a strictly religious manner, would at the same time make Christmas tree parties, plays, and even acquired horns and wind instruments, resulting in a quite good brass orchestra. But of special joy for him was when the young people would gather for the Fellowship of St. Ioasaph of Belgorod, where lectures used to be conducted on religious and philosophic topics and Bible study.*

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* The author of these memoirs was the first president of this society and was dearly loved by Blessed John.

Young men and women, the members of the St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Orphanage, used to love Archbishop John to such an extent that they never felt they were orphans. They knew that they had a strong protector, their spiritual father, who would not allow anyone to hurt them in this earthly life of man.

To depict in full the inward life of the ascetic of prayer and pastoral work of Archbishop John is difficult indeed. We can testify only in part. Remembering, however, his archpastoral deeds as an Orthodox man of prayer and an ascetic, we see in reality the power of the words of the holy Apostle James, *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

Archimandrite Benjamin (Garshin)
Australia, 1966

III

Your Grace: We have read the booklet published in California concerning the life and activity of the ever-memorable Archbishop John (Maximovitch), formerly of Shanghai.* I am Maria Petrovna Prigorovskaya (now Radionova), a former teacher of the Commercial college in Shanghai, and I know two cases of serious illnesses which were healed by the prayers of Vladika John.

1. Unfortunately, I do not remember the year, month, or day when in the orphanage of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, which was

* *Blessed John Maximovitch* (in Russian), St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California, 1971.

founded by Vladika John, a six or seven year old girl suddenly became ill. Towards night she had a very high temperature and she cried out from pain. About midnight she was sent to the hospital of the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood. The doctor who was called D.I. Kazakov, now reposed, found in the girl a twisting of the intestines (volvulus). Other doctors, as well as the mother of the girl, were also called. After an examination and consultation the doctors announced to the mother that the condition of her daughter was hopeless, and even an operation might be fatal. The mother nonetheless asked them to save the girl and perform the operation, and she herself, being a religious woman, went immediately at night to Vladika John, who lived in a house near the Cathedral, not far from the hospital.

Vladika John, who did not lie down on a bed at night, immediately received her and listened to her fervent request to pray for and save her only daughter. Vladika summoned the mother to the Cathedral, opened the Royal Gates, and began to pray before the Altar Table, while the mother, standing on her knees in front of the iconostasis, likewise fervently prayed for her daughter. This continued for a long time, and it was already dawn when Vladika John, having finished praying, went up to the mother, blessed her and told her to go home, for her daughter would be alive and well.

The mother, encouraged, hastened, not home, but to the hospital. There she met Dr. D.I. Kazakov, who told her that the o-

peration had proceeded successfully and added that he had never seen such a case in his practice. He was a very religious man and added that only God could have helped through her fervent prayer. Then the mother said that she had just come from Vladika John, who had been praying together with her in the Cathedral. Within a few days the girl was released from the hospital. The whole of Shanghai knew about this miraculous recovery of health.

2. Likewise I do not remember the date. A former teacher of our Commercial College became ill. He was taken to the hospital of the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood, where the doctors diagnosed a dangerous appendicitis and told his wife that he could die any minute. Dr. Ogilvy declared that even an operation would not help, and he might die during the operation. His wife was in despair. She remembered Vladika John, who had saved the girl by his prayers, and she went to him. Vladika knew the sick man well. The wife told him about the condition of her sick husband and asked him to pray for him. Vladika, having listened to her, calmed her and said that he would go to the hospital right away, and he added that the life of a man is not in the hands of doctors, but in the hands of God; and he sent her home. (She was a teacher at the girls' high school in Shanghai.)

Vladika John went to the hospital. He went up to the bed of the sick man, placed his hands on the man's head, prayed for a long time, and then blessed him and left.

When the wife came to the hospital to see the sick man, Nurse Cornilova, on meeting her, told her that an extraordinary thing had happened. Towards morning, in going through the wards, she had come to her husband and seen that he was sitting up in bed. She raised the sheet in order to put him back in bed, and she saw that the sheet on which he was sitting was all covered with pus and blood. The appendix had burst outwards and drenched the sheet. This was an extraordinary thing. The doctors affirmed that there had never been such a case in their practice, and when they found out about Vladika's visit and his prayer over the sick man, they understood that a miracle had occurred by the prayers of our dear Vladika, who was always a man of prayer for us.

The sick man did not even remember that Vladika had been to see him and had prayed for him. After his release from the hospital, he and his wife had a moleben of thanksgiving served and they thanked Vladika for his prayers.

Maria P. Radionova
October 5, 1971
Australia

IV

In the Philippines, "being leader of the church region where the church was located, and where the priests, nuns, and Vladika lived, I sometimes accompanied Vladika to the city of Guyan, where in a Philippine hospital there were seriously ill Russians whom Vladika visited, handing out pocket-size Gospels

and small icons. On one such trip, on entering the Russian ward we heard terrible screams coming to us from afar. To Vladika's question as to the reason for these screams, the Russian nurse replied that they came from a hopelessly sick woman who, since she disturbed the patients with her screaming, had been placed in the former American military hospital which adjoined this building. Vladika immediately decided to go to the sick woman, but the Russian nurse advised him not to go, as a sickening smell came from her. 'That doesn't mean anything,' Vladika said, and with quick strides he went to the sick woman in the next building. I followed him. In fact, there was an unpleasant odor coming from the sick woman. Going up to her, Vladika put a cross on her head and began to pray. I went out. Vladika prayed for a long time and then confessed the sick woman and gave her Holy Communion. When we left, she was no longer screaming, but only groaning softly. Some time passed. On another such trip to the hospital, we had hardly entered the courtyard in a jeep, when a woman came running out of the hospital and threw herself at Vladika's feet. It was the 'hopelessly' sick woman for whom Vladika had prayed."

G. Larin
Sydney, Australia

V

In 1968 there came to our Brotherhood of Father Herman in San Francisco a woman who informed us that her name was Anna Petrovna Lushnikova, and hearing that we were collecting information about Vladika John, she insisted that we immediately, without any delay, write down the following. She related that she was by profession a singing teacher and that she had once helped Archbishop Dimitry in China very much by her advice on breathing properly while pronouncing words, when his physicians had been powerless to help him. When Vladika John came to the Far East his unclear diction was noticed immediately by everyone. It was said that he was a stutterer from birth, that he had been wounded in the mouth, etc. But she immediately guessed what was wrong and came to him and offered to help. According to her, Vladika's whole organism was in a state of exhaustion. From weakness his lower jaw was hanging down and prevented him from pronouncing words clearly. She showed him how to breathe properly, to articulate, and so forth. He began regularly to come to her for exercises, sitting humbly and pronouncing "ooo," "aaa," etc. Out of gratitude he paid her, always leaving an American 20-dollar bill. Vladika's speech improved, but whenever a fast would come the defect would again make itself known, and again he would come to her. She tried to help him as much as she could, and seeing in him a man of God, she came to have

a great love for him and became his spiritual daughter.

"In Shanghai in 1945," Anna Petrovna told us, "I was wounded during the war, and I was dying in the French hospital. I knew that I was dying and I begged people to tell Vladika, so that he would come and give me Holy Communion. It was about 10 or 11 at night, and there was a storm outside with wind and rain. I was in agony and was suffering terribly. At my cries to call Vladika the doctors and nurses came and said that it was out of the question, as it was wartime and the hospital was locked up for the night, and I would have to wait until morning. I didn't listen to anything, but only continued to shout: 'Vladika, come! Vladika, come!' and no one could tell him of my wish. Suddenly, in the midst of this storm, I saw in the open door of the ward that Vladika had appeared, all wet, and was coming toward me. Since his arrival was something in the nature of a miracle, I began to feel him to see if he were real, and I asked, 'or is it your spirit?' He smiled quietly and said, 'Real,' and gave me Holy Communion. Here I fell asleep and slept after this for 18 hours. In the same ward with me there was another patient. She also saw Vladika giving me Holy Communion. After I woke up from my 18 hour sleep, I felt well and said that this was because Vladika had come and given me Holy Communion. But no one believed me and they said that Vladika couldn't possibly have entered the locked hospital in such a night. I asked my neighbor in the ward, and she confirmed that Vladika

had been there, but all the same they didn't believe us. But the fact was apparent—I was alive and felt well. At this time the nurse who didn't believe me was making my bed and she discovered, as if to authenticate what I had said—that there was a 20-dollar bill under the pillow, left there by Vladika! He knew that I owed the hospital a great deal and that I was already in need before that, and so he put the bill there. Later he confirmed that he had put the bill there. From that time on I got better. Later, in 1961, after a terrible automobile accident he again gave me Holy Communion in the hospital and healed me."

With this Anna Petrovna finished her story and left, saying how she wished that she could have been buried by Vladika John when she died. And her wish, even after the death of Vladika himself, was in fact fulfilled. Some time passed after our meeting. Coming home after the All-night Vigil for the Transfiguration of the Lord, Anna Petrovna died at night from gas fumes in her apartment. On the same night of the Transfiguration Olga I. Semeniuk, who had been close to Vladika in Shanghai, saw in a dream that Anna Petrovna, dead, was lying in a highly-raised coffin in the new cathedral in San Francisco, and Vladika John in his mantle was going around her censing and serving her funeral, to triumphal choral singing. In the morning all found out about her sudden death. And then we understood why the Lord had given her the idea to come to us and urgently insist that we write down her testimony of the

clairvoyance and wonderworking of Vladika John, who already in that other transfigured world, on the day of the Transfiguration, celebrated her funeral.

Reader Gleb Podmoshensky
December, 1968

Chapter 6
Victim of Envy
The Sufferings Endured by Blessed John in Shanghai

I'm sending you sad news: last night in L.A. Olga Ivanovna Semeniuk died, who was very close to Archbishop John in Shanghai. Lately she lived with her son B. For me it is a great loss. Pray for her. She used to tell me her reminiscences of days gone by in Shanghai, such things about Archbishop John which I don't know if you knew: how some people attempted to poison him and almost succeeded, for he was almost gone. The doctors doubted if he would live more than two months and decided upon sending him off as a hopeless case to a resort in Tsandau.

Blessed John had the habit of having his meal only once a day, late at night. The dinner would be prepared and brought to him. Often he would be so busy in his study and so forgetful that it would get cold. Once Mrs. Olga Semeniuk, whose sons were the bishop's devoted acolytes and were often with him, noticed that the food was not touched

by him. She took the plate, warmed the food and reminded the bishop that it was time to eat. He did not touch it, as if he knew something. Then she repeated the warming several times until she began to notice that the food turned some strange unnatural color, so she threw it away and brought him whatever was left from their own dinner, which he immediately gladly ate. This incident she recalled after the actual poisoning. (The incident in this paragraph was personally told the editor by Olga Semeniuk in 1969.)

Bishop John did not want to go to Tsandau and said: "Let Olga Ivanovna henceforth prepare food for me," which she gladly accepted and always would bring it herself and even stand before him until he would finish. No one touched his food. In two months he got well.

But once after Paschal Liturgy he did not come out from the altar for a long time. When he did, he came out pale as a sheet and began to throw up. The president of the Cathedral Sisterhood quickly brought a dish and handed it to him. He threw up some strange rose-colored matter. It was from the wine bottle from which he rinsed his chalice after the service. A hole was dug in the garden and it was buried. He was poisoned by a certain priest, who later lived in L.A. during our time and wrote very nasty articles in Russian newspapers. Father Peter T. used to tell much about him. Finally when he was dying from cancer, Archbishop John went to him in the hospital to release him from his sins, and he repented of his sins before his

death. He was a former school teacher in Russia, I think perhaps possessed.

Archbishop John used to visit hospitals at night and the Semeniuk boys accompanied him. In all hospitals they knew him and would open doors to him. The sick ones used to call him without the use of telephone or telegraph. I wrote down some other recollections of Olga Semeniuk. She died in her sleep. What a fortunate one!

May God give rest to the faithful servant of God and to Blessed John!

Helen Kontzevitch
1984

Chapter 7

Apostle to the West

1951-1966

In 1951, Archbishop John was assigned as ruling hierarch of the Western European Archdiocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. Here his missionary fervor, firmly grounded on his life of constant prayer and purity of Orthodox doctrine, brought forth abundant fruits.

In summing up the meaning of the Russian Diaspora, Vladika John wrote in 1938: "In chastising the Russian people, the Lord at the same time showed it the path to salvation, by making it a preacher of Orthodoxy throughout the entire world" (Report to Sobor of 1938, Yugoslavia). But Vladika John himself went far beyond the "unconscious preaching of Orthodoxy" that characterizes most of the Russian Diaspora, to become a conscious apostle to the Western lands which, once enlightened by the Christian Faith, had now for centuries lain in the darkness of heterodoxy, and its even darker offshoots.

Vladika showed special concern for the several young movements of return to Orthodoxy from Western error, with results that it is yet too early to calculate. For now it may be said that the only Western Church with its own bishop and monasteries (the Netherlands Orthodox Church) regards Archbishop John as its founder: the genuine French Orthodox Church today has its own hierarchy, thanks to his patronage; the only Spanish Orthodox priest (Madrid Mission) was ordained by him; and as for America—another story in itself—one finds an ever-increasing realization of Archbishop John as a virtual patron saint of authentic American Orthodoxy.

Of the great services which the Blessed Archbishop John has rendered to the Orthodoxy of the West, one of the most important concerns the veneration of those early Western Saints whose names, owing to the later apostasy of the Church of Rome, were never included in Orthodox calendars. Out of his great love for all the Church's Saints, Vladika collected the lives and icons or portraits of the Western Saints also; and when by God's Providence he was appointed ruling Archbishop of Western Europe, one of his first acts was to establish the proper ecclesiastical foundation for the veneration of these Saints in the Orthodox Church. The list of 1952 given below must be understood as a preliminary and very incomplete one.

I.
The Veneration of Local Saints

This is the Resolution on the question of the veneration of Western Saints made by the Bishops of the Western European Archdiocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, under the presidency of Archbishop John Maximovitch:

The question of the veneration of local Saints was considered at the conference of bishops which was held in Geneva on September 16-17 (OS), 1952, with Archbishop John presiding.

At the last Sobor of Bishops (of the entire Russian Church Outside of Russia) in 1950, in connection with the question of giving permission for the veneration of St. Anschar, Enlightener of Denmark and Sweden, the Sobor decreed that it should be left up to the local bishops to clarify the question of each local Saint separately. With this as a basis the conference took up this question. Archbishop John related briefly the biography of St. Anschar, who had his See in Hamburg and Bremen; and from this it is evident that there are no reasons to doubt the sanctity of his life, his apostolic labors and the miracles from his relics. If the Lord Himself has glorified him, it would be brazenness on our part not to revere him as a Saint. Vladika considers it essential to acknowledge that

St. Anschar is, in actuality, a God-pleasing Saint, who was glorified by the Orthodox Church in the West before its falling away from the Catholic Church, and therefore he should be glorified equally with other Saints. His memory is celebrated on February 3 (d. 865). The name of St. Anschar should henceforth be introduced into church calendars as a hierarch of the Church.

There are a number of other Saints in the West who should likewise be glorified equally with those Saints who have been glorified by the Orthodox Church in the East, since their veneration was established in profound antiquity. Among such Saints are:*

1. St. VICTOR, Martyr of Marseilles, d. 304. (July 21. St. John Cassian built a monastery over his tomb in the 5th century.)

2. St. POTHINUS, predecessor of St. Irenaeus as Bishop of Lyons. (Martyr, d. 177, June 2.)

3. Martyrs of Lyons: Sts. ALEXANDER (April 24) and EPIPODIUS (April 22). (Companions, martyred shortly after St. Pothinus; their relics were long kept together with those of St. Irenaeus); and St. BLANDINA and others (June 2, martyred with St. Pothinus in 177).

4. St. FELICIAN (Bishop of Foligno in Umbria, Italy; martyred 252, January 24).

5. St. GENEVIEVE, d. 512, January 3. (Virgin, consecrated to Christ by St. Germa-

* The information within parentheses has been supplied by the translators.

nus of Auxerre, renowned for miracles; Patroness of Paris.)

6. St. GERMANUS of Auxerre, d. 488, July 31. (Bishop, died in Ravenna; freed Britain from the Pelagian heresy.)

7. St. LUPUS of Troyes, d. 479. (Bishop and confessor; went with St. Germanus to Britain to combat the Pelagian heresy; Bishop of Troyes for 52 years.)

8. St. GERMANUS of Paris, d. 576, May 28. (First an abbot, then Bishop of Paris.)

9. St. CLOUD (Clodoald), d. 560, September 7. (Priest and Confessor; established a monastery near Paris.)

10. Preachers in Ireland, then in France, Switzerland, Italy, etc.: St. COLUMBAN (d. 615, Nov. 21; Abbot, founded many monasteries, including Luxeuil in France and Bobbio in Italy, where he died); St. FRIDOLIN (became a monk at Poitiers and spread the veneration of St. Hilary; then a missionary in Switzerland and on the Upper Rhine; d. 7th century, March 6); and St. GALL (a disciple of St. Columban, a hermit in Switzerland; d. 646, October 16).

11. St. CLOTILDE, Queen of France, d. 545. (June 3; by her prayers her husband, Clovis, King of the Franks, received the faith of Christ.)

12. St. HILARY of Poitiers. (Bishop and Confessor; led the battle against Arianism in the West; d. 368, January 13.)

13. St. HONORATUS of Lerins.(Founder of the Monastery of Lerins, then Archbishop of Arles; d. 429, January 16.)

14. St. VINCENT of Lerins, Teacher of the Church. (Priest, author of the *Commonitorium*; d.c. 450, May 24.)

15. St. PATRICK, Enlightener of Ireland. (Bishop and Confessor, ordained Bishop by St. Germanus of Auxerre; first to preach Christ in Ireland; d.c. 461, March 17.)

The following Resolution was made concerning the question of the veneration of Western Saints: Revering the memory of the Saints who have pleased God, and finding in the places of our Diaspora missionaries and ascetics of antiquity whose names were not known to us, we glorify the Lord, wondrous in His Saints, and venerate those who have pleased Him, extolling their sufferings and ascetic labors and calling upon them to be our intercessors and intermediaries with God. In view of this we established that the above-mentioned righteous ones be revered by the entire Orthodox Church, and we call upon pastors and flock to revere these Saints and to hasten to their intercession of prayer.

II.
Blessed John in France: Reminiscences of His Spiritual Daughter

by Zinaida V. Julem

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The period of Blessed John's life in France has so far been obscure, and not much information about it has been available. A devoted spiritual daughter of his, the author of these memoirs, Zinaida V. Julem, fills in this gap, giving us a view from the "inside" and disclosing the mystical world of perhaps the holiest man of the 20th century. Surely a prophet of such calibre could not get by without evoking envy and hatred, just as did the prophets of old. But to conceal this righteous man from the view of the thirsting new generation would be a sin, because the glory of God, revealed in the lives of the righteous, serves to enkindle that divine fire which Christ our Lord wishes to have burning upon this earth (Luke 12:49).

The following spiritual portrait of Blessed John comes from a simple, loving heart, guarded by the Patristic awareness of sobriety. Realizing that Blessed John was touched

by Divinity and was in contact with the mind of his Creator, the author was able to peer into the mystery of his sanctity. Although her observations only give us glimpses, they offer clear testimony to the close presence of the other world for which the Holy Orthodox Church prepares its children, and to the ability of God's Saints to penetrate that realm even while on earth. That mystery, that revelation beyond our glimpses, remains hidden in God. It is opened to those who, like Blessed John, ascend on the wings of divine love for God and their neighbor. And those of us who watch from below are given renewed hope and the inspiration to increase our upward striving.

Father Herman

1. MY FIRST MEETING

I will begin my account with how I first met Archbishop John. Matushka Helen Dimitrievna Solodovnikova used to tell me many stories about the elders of Optina and I began to desire to be able to meet one of such elders. At that time I had many difficulties of all kinds and I was imploring God that He send me such an elder. About the same time I found out from someone that Father Theodore Bokach was going to Mount Athos and I approached him with a request that he ask Father Archimandrite Nicholas, the Abbot of St. Elias Skete on Mount Athos, to allow me to write to him seeking spiritual direction. But when Father Theodore returned he informed me that the abbot blessed me to turn with my

request to Archbishop John Maximovitch, adding: "You have your own saint, Blessed John."

The wife of General Polovtsev, Natalia Ivanovna, our good friend, told me that he often served in Medone and that in a few days he would serve and give a talk in Paris. We agreed to go there together.

In expectation of the Archbishop, my mother anticipated to see a stately hierarch, like the ones she used to see in St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petersburg in Russia, but when she heard that the bishop had arrived and saw a short gray-haired elder in a white cassock with an uncovered head, in amazement she loudly exclaimed, "Why that's dear Seraphim of Sarov!" At this he turned in our direction, bent his head a little to one side and meekly smiled. But Matushka Solodovnikova, when she saw him for the first time earlier in Cannes, as they were vesting him before Liturgy in the middle of the church, thought to herself: What an extraordinary hierarch—and a fool-for-Christ at that." Suddenly at this moment he turned his head back, looked her over from head to foot and smiled at her. She was shocked at his clairvoyance and only feared that she might have thought something bad about him.

Soon after that Matushka Solodovnikova and I went to Versailles, to the Cadet Corps, where he was staying. We stood through the whole Liturgy and at the end approached to venerate the Cross. The bishop was distributing antidorion himself. He at once gave Matushka a large piece, but before giving

one to me he began to hesitate and very slowly selected a piece for me, so that I began to fear and think he did not want to give me antidorion. Mentally I begged God that he would not deprive me of it. Finally he selected a piece and gave it to me. Then he blessed us, made us drink some holy water and we left.

2. A HOLY ELDER IN FULL TRADITION

Soon I again visited the bishop, but this time alone. At that time I was offered a position to work in a Children's Home in Mongeron, because I was seeking employment and a place where I could stay with my nephew, who was entrusted to my guardianship. I did not particularly want to go there, where children were kept under a very rigid surveillance, but I had no other alternative. Besides, the lady who worked there before me already left the job. Thus I wanted from the bishop only a blessing to go to Mongeron, but in actuality I was drawn to him in my heart.

Having arrived in Versailles at his place, I was conducted to his cell. He lived in a small room, whose walls were all covered with wooden gratings of little boxes which were filled with bundles of letters tied with strings; and under each box there was a number. Near the window next to a small table there was a rather deep armchair in which he sat facing the window. In the corner by the door there was a large bag with dry prosphoras. When I came in he got up,

came up to me and blessed me, and I began to talk to him. I said:

"Your Eminence, bless me to accept the job at Mongeron and go there to live." I was sure that he would bless, but he thought for a while and answered:

"No, it is better to go to Chalifere." He then began to look for something in his little address book. I stood there thinking that I had never even heard of this Chalifere and did not pay any attention to his words. During the time of this conversation the poor man was standing and I did not even think of asking him to sit down in his armchair. I only now remembered about it. He gave me many pieces of advice and after that he would appear to me several times in my dreams telling me what to do. And all that he told me came true, as if he had known all beforehand. Then I did not fully realize that he had a gift of clairvoyance from God. He apparently hid it so humbly and unnoticeably that we who came to him would not guess about it, because at that time I was not amazed even at the following:

I met Blessed John in 1958 and my father died on May 7th, 1957, on Bright Wednesday. Not long before that my father had said, "Today some monk visited me; he was short in stature, all in black." I thought for a long time who could it have been, but since at that time I did not know Blessed John, I did not solve that question.

Now at Blessed John's, I thought: what a pity that I did not know him then when my father was sick; he would have prayed him

back to health. At this moment he said to me, "You know, I visited your father in the hospital." And at this time he opened up his little address book to a certain page and read aloud the name, patronymic and last name of my father, saying, "Here, I found it—Basil Maximovitch Julem."

But he did not even know my last name; how could he have known and read my thoughts if he were not clairvoyant? That meant that my father was destined not to get well.

Before leaving, I asked him to give me a prosphora. He began to dig in the sack with the dry prosphoras, finally selected one of the "Nine Orders" and gave it to me. He also blessed me with a paper icon of the Lesna Mother of God. At that time I still did not know about the Lesna Convent. Then he took me to church, gave me holy water to drink and said that he must go to Paris. I became overjoyed, thinking that I would go together with him. He walked very fast and I thought that he perhaps did not want me to go with him. Nevertheless I tried not to lag behind him too far. When we came to the stop, the taxi still was not there. He blessed me, but when the taxi arrived it turned out that there was only one seat left. He asked me if I was in a hurry? I, of course, said I was not. Then he sat down and kept blessing me for a long time until the taxi disappeared from sight.

The following day I went to see Matushka Solodovnikova and she showed me a photograph, saying: "Why don't you go to Chali-

fere?" She told me that it was a Russian Children's Home, which was under the patronage of Archbishop John. I at once liked the description of this Home. But what could I do? To refuse accepting the job in Mongeron, when the position was vacant and no one to replace me, was not right. With a heavy heart I walked that Sunday to meet the lady to whom I had to promise that I would go to Mongeron. So I came, greeted the lady, trying to smile and said, "I accept your offer." I saw that the lady was not too happy, so I asked what was the matter. She told me that the woman who worked there before had suddenly changed her mind and wanted the job back. "Glory be to God!" With what joy I crossed myself—as if a heavy stone had been taken off my shoulders. Thus I went to Chalifere according to the words of Blessed John.

3. ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT

Here is how my nephew was given to me. Still before my meeting Blessed John, I saw a dream. It seemed as if I was standing in a large church and saw somebody's Sepulchre, and I knew in my mind that this was the sarcophagus of the Righteous John of Kronstadt. And suddenly I saw Father John getting up from his coffin. Having gotten up, he quickly went and hid himself behind a column. Everybody around there began to shout: Where is Father John? They did not know that he was alive. And I ran behind the column and looked at him. He asked me what I wanted, not openly, but as if with his

eyes, and I answered: "Father John, bless me!" He blessed me and I woke up.

At once I remembered that I still wanted him to bless my family, because a long time ago Father John blessed my mother to go to a monastery. She wanted very much to go into his convent on Karpovka, but then she met my father and soon they decided to get married. My father went to Kronstadt to get the blessing from Father John and stayed there for three days in hope of seeing him, but returned not having seen him. Perhaps Father John did not want to bless this marriage because just previously he had blessed mother for monasticism. Mother often would even joke, saying, "Our family is an 'unblessed' one." This often upset me and I wanted Father John to bless our family. And soon I fell asleep again and saw that it was as if Father John was sitting on a sofa and myself next to him. And I was imploring him: "Batiushka John, bless our family." He smiled and blessed. Then I decided to ask him to bless me to go to a monastery. But then I saw that he did not want to do it, and he said to me, not using language, but again with his eyes, as it were, "For his sake you must remain here;" and he pointed to the wall. And I saw how out of this wall there gradually emerged an infant. I began to cry bitter tears and woke up. Soon the wife of my brother gave birth to a baby boy and became sick with tuberculosis, and I was given my nephew to bring him up when he still was not even a month old. These dreams I saw before the canonization of Righteous John.

So I went to Chalifere and was very happy living there with him. That was the best time in my life. But then came a big temptation. My mother for some strange reason began to call me all the time to go back home. She would insist: "Come back, it is very difficult for me without you." She would even call me on the telephone practically every day. I asked Blessed John what to do, and he answered, "better stay." Then I still did not know that one should be absolutely attentive to Blessed John, as to one of the Optina elders, who were receptive to God's will directly. But because I was brought up in complete obedience to my parents, I went home. As soon as I arrived, mother said, "Why did yo come?" But it was too late; I could not go back again, my place was already taken. So I had to submit myself to the will of God. But from that time on such trouble assailed me that, if it were not for Blessed John's prayers, I for certain would have not endured at all. At approximately that time Blessed John began at our church free trapeza meals after services, to which I afterwards dedicated my whole life. He was a holy man and I treasured every minute of my association with him. At times it would happen that he would come down to have tea, and I, busy all day long, would then have a chance to ask him many questions, which had arisen and gathered in my mind during the day—but I would forget what the questions were. Then he, sitting quietly with his head bent low, would softly speak, as if to himself, answering all my unuttered ques-

tions! I would stand there behind him in total amazement, not daring to take a breath. Those were unforgettable moments.

4. A GIFT OF CLAIRVOYANCE FROM GOD

After my first talk with Blessed John I tried to see him more often. I always tried to get to Lesna Convent when he would be serving there; I went there to receive Holy Communion. On the eve I read the prayer rule before Communion and went to bed peacefully, thinking that tomorrow I would receive Communion from Blessed John. In the morning, though, while finishing reading the prayers, I heard a commotion downstairs. It turned out that Blessed John had to go urgently to Paris. I fell into despondency from disappointment, and everything turned sour. So I decided to mentally implore Blessed John, "Take me with you, take me with you," fearing even to go downstairs since I would burst into tears before the bishop. Suddenly I heard that someone was calling the Abbess and saying to her, "Zina must urgently return home to Paris. But how, when at this early hour there is no train available?" Standing there in the room behind the closed door and hearing this, I thought that my heart would burst from happiness. I was still upstairs, still waiting to be called, while pretending that I knew nothing. And how strange!—I did not even for a minute think that something could have gone wrong at home. Soon they came for me. I pretended that I was very concerned and was getting ready. I came downstairs. There around the car the whole convent was gathered and ev-

erybody seemed to be a bit troubled. I came to the car; there was only one free seat left, just for me. I sat down and, accompanied by everybody's singing the travelling prayer, *Guardian Angel*, we departed.

Just think, Blessed John did not even ask me where I must get off to go home! But as for me, I was not thinking of anything except that I was happy and that I was travelling with the blessed man. We arrived at the church: they vested him, then the service began, then I received Holy Communion, then the service ended and he was finally divested. The people crowded around him and he got into the car, blessed us all and disappeared... I came home utterly happy, fulfilled as if a bit drunk. They call it *grace to overflowing*. Nobody at home was expecting me. They were even surprised that I got home so quickly. What could it have been, my "urgent" departure from Lesna? But I did not even bother to find out. Mystically I understood, if you can call it understanding:

He heard my plea and made a miracle.

5. SPIRITUAL VIGILANCE

While I was in the company of such a man as Blessed John, the spiritual reality of the closeness of the other world began gradually to dawn upon me. I began to be drawn closer into the realm of grace, only to experience the pain of tribulation and sorrow with ever increasing strength.

Another time I went to the Convent when Blessed John was not there, but I stay-

ed there overnight. At that time I had a lot of temptations. That night I saw a dream. I saw that I was standing at the door of the Convent's guesthouse and looking through the open gates and out into the street. There Blessed John was coming into the Convent. As he entered, he turned to me and said, "Watch out! Be vigilant!" I was startled and at once looked through the gates on the other side of the street, and I saw there three unclean spirits—all black, dressed in tights; one was tall and heavy, the other tall and very thin and the third of medium height and somehow fat. All three had their hands in their pockets and made believe that they did not pay any attention to me. I woke up.

After this dream my temptations began to increase, and each time that I had serious temptations I heard Blessed John's voice: "Watch out! Be vigilant!" And every time in those terrible moments he saved me.

6. DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

There was another remarkable incident, about which one could say that Blessed John saved me from certain death. On that particular day, because I had to go out, I looked out from the window and saw that in front of our entrance way and between two cars there was some strange, curious object, similar to a piece of pipe, about a foot long and four inches in diameter—it's hard for me to say exactly. "What a strange thing that is!" I thought, and curiosity got the best of me. "Why don't I go down and just touch it with my foot, see what it is?" So I began to get

dressed, but then I really paid little attention to it, when all of a sudden the doorbell rang. I opened the door and there was our dear bishop! What would his unexpected call bring, I thought.

Blessed John came in and proceeded through the corridor into the room, not saying anything. Then he sat down in the armchair. I began to busy myself around him, not knowing what to say or do. He was silent and I was silent. Thus he sat for about five minutes and then got up, blessed me and left. I stood there perplexed—what in the world was the meaning of all this? Then my attention was drawn back to the front window, where outside by this time a truck had arrived at our front door and a group of policemen were busying themselves. Some men very carefully picked up that curious object which I just recently had wanted to touch, placed it into the vehicle and cautiously departed. I went outside to find out what was going on.

At that time in Paris there were many terrorist bombings, and that object was one of these bombs! What would have happened to me if I would have gone out and touched it with my foot as I had intended to do but had been prevented by the inexplicable visit by our dear Blessed John, to whom my intent had been revealed? That day he surely saved my life.

7. "VARENNIKI"

Blessed John lived in a house in Paris by this time, not far from where we lived.

Every day I would run there bringing food, which was prepared by Mother. He liked very much cheese dumplings, called in Ukrainian *varenniki*. Once Mother made these varenniki for him and placed them on our table for me to take to him. At this moment my uncle Alex came in and looked at these varenniki in such a way that it was evident that he wanted to eat them up. Evidently he thought to himself: "They would not make them for me, but for the bishop they would." And it was true that at that time we were tight with money and whatever best food we could get Mother would always use for the bishop.

So this time I brought to him these varenniki with great joy, thinking that he would surely enjoy eating them. And what do you think he did?

The holy bishop sat down at the table, ate unwillingly a little bit of other food, but would not even touch these varenniki. And no matter how much I tried to offer them to him, no matter how I pleaded with him that he should taste them, at that particular time he did not touch any of these varenniki. Evidently he felt how much my uncle Alex wanted to eat them.

8. THE SUITCASE

In the same house in which Blessed John had his residence, there also lived his main priest, Archimandrite Mitrofan, who originally came from the city of Voronezh and whom blessed John tonsured into monasticism, giving him the new monastic name of his city's patron saint, St. Mitrofan. This good

father was absolutely dedicated to Blessed John and understood that his hierarch was a living, genuine saint, misunderstood by many churchmen simply because they did not know about real saints and how they behave. This caused a lot of harrassing of the saint and unnecessary commotion. The saint, however, knew much intuitively, but often did not speak of it, relying on God's providence.

Once after service, Father Mitrofan and those who attended the services remained in the church a bit longer and Father Mitrofan began to tell us that a whole campaign was being raised against our dear bishop, actually a veritable persecution, and that they wanted to remove him from Paris. Some people wrote to the Synod, asking that Archbishop John be transferred to Brussels. We all became terribly upset and did not know what to do. Finally we decided to sign a petition and sent it off to the Synod at once. But it did not help because after several days the Synodal decree arrived, assigning him to Brussels. We were terribly saddened and, as usual, helpless and frightened.

But Mother Magdalena was indignant and took it very hard. She got busy and sent me a whole suitcase full of the Archbishop's riassons and cassocks, since she was in charge of this department. She loved the Blessed One dearly, and very sternly declared to me that I should put all his clothing in proper order and into one suitcase and to make absolutely sure that I send it with the Archbishop. She strictly instructed that under no condition was it to remain here.

I did as she told me. But when I brought the suitcase before the Archbishop's departure, he took all others, but this one he would not take. I insisted that he take it, because I was afraid that Mother Magdalena would be very angry with me. The Archbishop made an attempt to protest, but, encountering my firm resistance, took that suitcase unwillingly and left.

Soon it turned out that the Archbishop was transferred again back to Paris and returned. He brought back all his suitcases, except the one I had handed to him. It had gotten lost and it was never found.

9. A TRIP TO RUSSIA

Matushka Solodovnikova and her son Alyosha decided to go to Russia and they came to Blessed John to get a blessing for the journey. At first he did not particularly want to bless them, but later he did. But when they left, he at once spent the whole night in prayer. I found out about it the next morning, because when I came the neighbors downstairs complained that he had kept walking all night long and they heard him praying. A few days later I was in church and heard how Blessed John, doing the commemoration at the proscomedia, loudly prayed for the "severely suffering Helen and Alexis!" I was surprised. On the next day, or even the same day, we received a telegram, in which I read that Matushka had fallen in the metro escalator while in Moscow and was seriously wounded and in a hospital, and that Alyosha was in despair and did not

know what to do. But our Blessed One knew beforehand and prayed, and of course prayed Matushka out of trouble. Glory to Thee, O God!

10. MIDNIGHT MEALS

When Blessed John and Father Mitrofan moved to their house next to the church, I regularly began to come there to prepare food. Blessed John, as a rule, would come for the day's main meal late in the evening by midnight, and I would always try to be there to warm everything for him so that he could eat hot food. I would stay to the end of the meal. He would often come all frozen, shivering from cold. I remember as if it were now how Blessed John would come downstairs, always barefoot, when our floor had no linoleum, just simple cold cement. I would try to place a little rug for his feet, but he deliberately would always manage to stand right next to the rug, but not on it. Father Mitrofan acquired a special portable little heater and arranged that the radiator be placed right over Blessed John's armchair, so that it would blow warm air on his back.

Father Mitrofan liked fish very much. Whenever it was allowed to eat fish, he either cooked it himself or asked Mother to fry it. He especially relished a fish called "sungary," which was heavy and had a strong smell, while I generally never liked fish, especially that one. But since my job required me to prepare the food, I also had the privelege of sharing the meals with the Archbishop and Father Mitrofan.

And so it would happen that we three would sit down at the table to a whole heap of this fish, which would ominously stare at me. I would look at it with horror and think: "Oh, good God, how will I ever eat this fish?"

Meanwhile, Father Mitrofan would smile and say to the hierarch, "Your Eminence, give Zina a bigger portion." And His Eminence with his generous hand would carefully select the biggest fish and place it on my plate. I would be almost in tears. But what could I do? I must eat! Barely, barely, would I be able to finish it, when from the side of Father Mitrofan a whole half of another such fish would fall into my plate. I would be at a loss, not knowing what to do. But almost in tears I would nevertheless finish that one also, thinking to myself: "Oh, my goodness, not only will I not be able to get home, but I will not even be able to get up from this table!" But nothing of the sort ever happened! I would get up from the table without any difficulty, be able to do whatever was needed afterwards, and would quite nicely get home and sleep like a baby without feeling any nausea. This is what it means to have a blessed man's blessing.

11. ANSWERS TO UNSPOKEN QUESTIONS

Very often I had to ask Blessed John several questions, but never was able to manage to do this during the day, because after Liturgy he would either be busy with something, with Panikhidas, or he would be called by someone on the telephone, or he would

simply go up to his cell and I would not want to disturb him. Thus the whole day would be spent, and when at night he would come and it would be the right time to ask him without disturbance, I would to my regret forget the questions. And just think! While eating hunched over the plate, enjoying his soup or something else that he liked, he would quite unnoticeably, as if addressing not me but himself, would begin to talk. And I would listen and marvel: all my questions, which I had wanted him to answer and had not said aloud but just thought about, our dear Blessed John quietly answered!

12. HOLY WATER

Blessed John loved our church and together with Father Mitrofan he put much labor and care into it. This care was, of course, mystical, "unseen to the naked eye," and seemed strange and odd to the *wise and prudent* of this world—even Orthodox clergy—but was a *revelation unto babes* (Matt. 11:25). He had great faith in the power of Holy Water. Every night he would bless the church with Holy Water from top to bottom and from bottom to top. I remember how we would walk around our whole city block, around those houses which were adjacent to or touching our church. I would carry the water, Father Mitrofan and I would sing and Blessed John would sprinkle all over, usually quite abundantly. Once we walked three times around all the houses which were connected to our house. Then we crossed the street and he blessed the mail box into which he

himself, as a rule, deposited his letters, walking to the box and sealing it with the sign of the Cross. He would never allow anybody else to drop his letters for him. Day or night, rain or snow, he would walk across the street often barefoot just to drop a letter.

As we were returning from the procession, some old Frenchwoman approached us and asked Blessed John to sprinkle her head and bless her, which he did. There were cases when some people who had been met by him like that would come to us thanking him for favors granted. He then of course would act as if he knew nothing.

Later, when Blessed John had already gone to San Francisco, that same mail box unfortunately was replaced by another one, and I was much grieved over this. But when he came to visit us, he at once told me:

"Zina, give me Holy Water and the sprinkling brush and follow me." I did as he asked. And what would you think he did? He immediately went to the new mail box and blessed it and sprinkled it with the Holy Water. How remarkable it is that he read all my thoughts!

13. ST. GERASIM OF JORDAN

I loved when Blessed John would serve and after each Liturgy would unfailingly tell the lives of the Saints for the day! And how picturesque was his narrative! When he spoke you could see everything before your eyes. He loved to tell the story of St. Gerasim of the Jordan with the lion. It was so endear-

ing, so childlike and guileless. Thus I learned to love that saint with all my heart. And again his talks of that saint turned out to be also providential. After Father Mitrofan left us, one of our next priests was Hieromonk Gerasim, who upon arrival said exactly the very same phrase that Blessed John had foretold about starting a Youth Brotherhood in our church. Young and energetic, Father Gerasim brought into reality that Youth Brotherhood, truly a good work and beneficial for many, both young and old. The enemy of our salvation began to persecute Father Gerasim, who was a true ascetic (and even in some ways attempted to imitate Blessed John), and through unkind people his health was destroyed and his good work stopped. And now our church is truly small in more ways than one, just as was predicted by Blessed John. But about that I'll mention later in discussing when blessed John was leaving us for the last time.

14. ONENESS OF SOUL

When our dear Blessed John was leaving us in order to rule the San Francisco diocese, it seemed to me that, although our beloved Father Mitrofan was to remain with us, I would nevertheless be losing everything and would remain a total orphan. Up to now I cannot recall this moment without tears. When, after the Liturgy on the day of Blessed John's departure, he came out of the altar with his staff in his hands in order to tell us a few words of consolation, at that moment I thought: "O Lord, what shall

I do, not being able to see my Elder any longer, not being able to hear his voice, and not feel his presence? where he is going... it is so far away!" And when he began his sermon I began to cry bitter tears; they flowed out of me like two rivers. The Blessed John turned his gaze towards my direction and said:

"People who have the same goal and who strive towards the *one thing needful* have oneness of soul and they never feel the distance of separation. And no matter how great that distance is, it can never be the cause of hindrance to that spiritual closeness uniting these people in oneness of soul."

And after these words my tears at once dried up as if by magic, and the thought even crossed my mind: "How strange! It's as if someone has turned off the tap." At once it became so warm in my heart, so pleasant, as joyful as on Pascha, that I even forgot that our Blessed One was leaving us. and when we went to see him off at the airport, instead of sorrow I felt joy. I absolutely did not feel that he was leaving us for good.

What was it that caused my sorrow to suddenly turn to joy? His prayers.

Since then and even up to now, I feel that he is near, next to me; and I talk to him and ask him whatever is necessary.

The next night after Blessed John's departure, I saw a dream: some old monk, with long, silvery hair down to his shoulders, entered our church. He walked into it, blessed it and left. I took a good

look at him. It was clear and I distinctly remembered his features. I felt I knew him, but I had never seen him before. Who could it have been? Only much later I saw his portrait and recognized him to be Bishop Theophan the Recluse. But before my dream I had never seen how he looked in any of his depictions. This visitation, I am sure, was some sort of opening up into the otherworldly realm of spiritual life, to which Blessed John was so close. Who knows what visitors he entertained during his long whole-night vigils and lonely prayer in our cold church? Perhaps this tardy visitor came to bid farewell, or perhaps came on time to replace him? These were the Gospel *crumbs from the Master's table* which would accidentally fall to us below. We witnessed only a momentary shadow of what he saw clearly, as in a day.

Even when he was far away, our dear Blessed John did not forget us and would often write letters to Father Mitrofan, in which he would ask about us and send his blessing. The first Pascha without him arrived. After the Paschal midnight Liturgy, when we all came down to our trapeza hall to break the fast, suddenly I heard the telephone ring. I ran to answer and—O Lord!—it was him, our dear Blessed John! "Christ is risen, my dear Archbishop!" I cried. He was greeting us with the radiant Feast of Christ's Resurrection! Then Father Mitrofan came to the telephone and spoke with him for a long time. What an unusually joyous feeling, one that is impossible to forget! Surely this must be the state of being in God's grace, jubilation of

spirit, which, according to patristic wisdom, is usually accompanied (and threatened) by sorrows out of demonic envy. They are like shadows—the more the light, the darker the shadows. That is why joys and sorrows in spiritual life are so intermixed.

On his next visit to us, Blessed John showed me his pocket watch pinned to his riassa and said, "I did not change the watch and always knew the exact time when you have services here," and he smiled. What a wonderful, consoling idea! He was praying together with us even though he was so far away! Truly—oneness of soul!

15. THE KAZAN ICON

When, after his departure to San Francisco, Blessed John came to Paris for the first time, he of course stayed in his little cell at our church. That was when Father Mitrophan was with us. In the evening Blessed John asked me to come up to his cell and take down something for him. As I came into his cell I saw on his table a newspaper, on which there was a photograph of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God. Some time ago, long before we had met Archbishop John, mother and I had read in the newspapers that in England some antiquarian had an old Russian icon and that people thought that it was the original Kazan Icon. It was in a very expensive riza, and of course would cost an incredible amount of money should someone want to buy it back for the Russian Church, then probably they would be able to return to their native land. I was intrigued by this

question and always wanted to know whether it was the original miracle-working icon or not.

And now in Blessed John's cell I saw this newspaper article and rejoiced to think that now I would ask him about it. But when I came down, I got so busy fixing food and other such things that I forgot all about it. After the meal Blessed John went up to his cell and I went home.

In the morning I returned to church and after tea Blessed John called me, asking me to iron out the veil for his klobuk. I entered his cell and saw on the table again the same newspaper, but this time it was turned over so that the article was on the bottom and I again forgot to ask him as I had intended to do the night before. As I was just about to leave his cell, I stopped at the threshold, thinking that I heard him say something. At that moment he turned the newspaper over and casually said:

"This is a very beautifully painted icon and is in an expensive riza, but it is not the original, because the measurements do not match the prototype." I was dumbfounded at his clairvoyance and, instead of asking for an explanation about the icon and why he was telling this to me, all I could muster myself up to say was, "What a pity!" Shaken to the very essence of my existence, I went downstairs.

After several days Blessed John flew back to California, and soon afterwards our Father Mitrophan also left. And we remained all alone, like orphans, without our dear men of prayer.

16. TEARS OF A SAINT

Now I want to tell you that we all complain about our sorrows, but Blessed John never complained, although he—the poor man—had so many troubles, and often not even his own! I myself was a witness when once I chanced to go to the church when there were no services and heard that someone was crying. Puzzled, I quietly went up the steps and entered the church. There I heard that the sound was coming from the altar. The side door was slightly open and I peeked in. To my amazement I saw the bare soles of Blessed John's feet sticking out from behind the altar table. He was kneeling with his head buried in his hands and was weeping so bitterly. I quickly withdrew and went downstairs. It was impossible to look at.

17. UNCREATED LIGHT

In the very beginning of our church in Paris, when Blessed John was still here with us, there came from Switzerland an old man by the name of Gregory. (I remember neither his patronymic nor his last name.) He wanted Blessed John to ordain him to the priesthood, but Blessed John did not want to and said that he still had a lot to learn. Why he did not want to do it became apparent later.

This old gentleman, Gregory, often used to read in the cliros and liked to read Akathists to the Most Holy Mother of God. Once he was reading the Hours. Blessed John was doing the proskemedia in the altar and the side door was open. I was not then in

the church, only Gregory was. Later he told me what happened at that time. Having finished reading the Hours, he wanted to ask Blessed John something and went to the altar. When he approached the open side door, he became frozen to the spot! He saw Blessed John surrounded in uncreated radiant light and standing not on the ground, but about a foot above it. He quickly withdrew and could not ask him anything. Blessed John continued the service and Gregory did not talk about the incident for a long time. When he told me, he made me take an oath before the Gospel that I would not tell anyone before Blessed John's death. This kind old man never became a priest because soon after that he died.

Exactly the same type of occurrence was related to me by an old nun from Lesna. When she and the other Sisters were living in Lesna, Blessed John often used to come up to one icon in the church, that of the Iveron Mother of God, which he apparently liked very much and before which he used to pray. Once, when he was thus praying before that icon, this nun came in and saw the same thing that Gregory had seen. Blessed John was surrounded in radiant light and was standing not on the ground, but above it!

18. PERSECUTION

Still later we had to endure many sorrows and difficult tribulations. Everything became sad and gray, even in the church. A new priest was in charge who was evidently instructed to be distrustful of Blessed John.

Finally, one fine day we received joyful news from Father Mitrophan. He wrote that our dear Blessed John was planning to come and that he would like to stay in his cell, which he liked so much. I began to make preparations. Soon all preparations were ready. We were anxiously awaiting his return to us, even if for a short time. At last he arrived and I ran to get his blessing. He proceeded into the altar and I hastened to help bring his things into his cell upstairs. When I came down he came out from the altar and intended to go up into his cell. I asked him:

"Your Eminence, I'll make coffee at once. Should I bring it up to you?"

"No, Zina, don't bother. I'll come down and will have it with you all. Call me when it's ready."

In ten minutes everything was ready. I went upstairs from the kitchen by way of the narrow corridor between the staircase and the church and called the bishop. He came out and walked downstairs. At this moment the new priest in charge came out from his room upstairs and began descending the staircase, then stopped three steps short of the bottom. He looked at me sternly and said, "His Eminence will drink his coffee in his cell." To this I at once retorted that His Eminence had specifically expressed the desire to drink coffee downstairs. But the priest even with greater sternness exclaimed, "I am telling you, that he will drink in his cell. I am in charge here. I give the orders!"

These words struck me like a knife and I hid my face in my hands and stood

there motionless, not being able to look either at Blessed John or at the priest in charge. Finally I did look up at my dear Blessed John. He stood with his arms and head lowered towards the ground. After several seconds he slowly began to walk up the steps, entered his cell and locked himself in. I went to the kitchen, prepared everything, put it all on a tray and brought it up. Since I could not enter, I placed it on a table in an adjacent room. After that I at once ran away home; I could not endure it any longer. In about an hour I returned to church, opened the door and instinctively stepped away from it: in the corridor and in the whole church it was dark and cold, as if in a grave. My heart shrunk and at once a thought flashed in my mind: grace has abandoned us!

I rushed upstairs and without knocking opened the door to the cell. The cell was empty! In tears I fell on the floor and began to pray, begging God that Blessed John return. Then I began to sob out loud: "Oh, my dearest bishop! Why have you left me? Why have you left me? Why haven't you left me anything from you, not even the littlest suitcase?" In such a state I lay on the floor for I don't know how long. Finally I got up. Emotionless, like an automation, I left the cell and, reaching the staircase, I stopped. Suddenly I heard the door downstairs open up very slowly. In walks Blessed John, again with his head bent low as if guilty, and in his hand he holds a little suitcase. He goes up the stairs and enters his cell. I silently

follow him. He places the suitcase on the floor and says:

"Here, I brought the suitcase for you!"

And at this moment everything became bright in my soul! Everything became again as it was before he left us. O Lord! It is my dear one. He came back, knowing in spirit how I wept, and with such a guilty look, to say that he is sorry that he hurt someone.

How frightful it is to hurt a man of God. With him all grace left the church. But when he forgave everything, then the grace returned to church. But after that he never stayed with us anymore. He stayed with the French priest of the French Orthodox Church, whose wife was very seriously sick then. She had a malignant tumor in her head and Blessed John prayed her back to health. He stayed in Paris then for quite some time, for that was his last visit to us in 1965, and in 1966 he was already gone from us for good.

As for the priest in charge, he later regretted and publicly repented that due to the enemy's instigation he had hated' Blessed John. But it was too late.

19. MY BROTHER GEORGE

During this visit of Blessed John, the Kursk Icon of the Theotokos was also visiting from America with Archbishop John and she visited all the churches in Paris. She was in Medon, in the French Church (which was under Blessed John's patronage), and even in the cathedral on Rue Daru.

My brother George could not venerate the Icon because he was home, sick in bed. I

knew that the Icon would not visit our church again because it was returning to America in a few days and many old-age homes had to be visited, as well as the homes of people who had specifically requested it in advance. I was deeply grieving that my brother George would not be able to kiss the Icon.

On this particular day our priest in charge was absent—he accompanied the Icon somewhere, and Blessed John served Liturgy in our church. During the service I thought of telephoning my brother and telling him to come at once to get at least Archbishop John's blessing before he left. So I did it right away. My brother agreed, but said that he could not stay long in church, because at eleven o'clock a client was waiting for him and he had to see him. He came and stood in the corridor and was waiting for the hierarch to come out of the altar, but the bishop would not come out, although the Liturgy was over. I was terribly upset seeing that George also began to get nervous. The side door to the altar was open and I saw how Blessed John was standing before the Table of Preparation and was consuming the Divine Gifts. I knelt before an icon of the Most Holy Mother of God and began mentally to pray to Her: "O Most Holy Queen of Heaven! Help us, so that Blessed John will come out of the altar and bless George, otherwise he might leave right away. You saw that he could not venerate the miraculous Kursk Icon. Help me, my dear One, that our dear Blessed One will come out quickly." And then, turning men-

tally directly to him, I also began to pray to him that he quickly come out, saying: "You yourself know very well that George did not have the chance to get a blessing from the I-con, and now even you will not bless him—then what will happen? You know how I will suffer if he will miss your blessing, too."

And what do you think happened?

At that very moment I heard the entrance door open up and several people come in, but I still did not see them. I only saw that George moved to make way. Then I clearly saw that our priest in charge and two other priests also entered, and that one of them was holding the miracle-working Kursk Icon on his shoulders. I cried to Blessed John: "The Mother of God has arrived."

Blessed John quickly turned around, came out from the altar and went straight to meet the Icon. The priest opened the icon-case and allowed the first person to venerate—it was George! I cannot describe to you with what gratitude I was then filled.

I saw how Blessed John took the Icon in his arms and brought it to our local miracle-working Icon, which he touched with it. Next he placed it on the main stand in the middle of the church so that all could venerate it. He then went to George, blessed him and George went away! All so quickly, unexpectedly and so perfectly timed!

I am absolutely certain that Blessed John prayed for all that, and that only thanks to his holy prayers all came out so amazingly, so miraculously synchronized!

Previously Blessed John had helped George in finding a job, which had been difficult to get due to his severe sickness. He still holds that job and is happy with it.

20. MY NAMEDAY GIFT

Blessed John soon had to be leaving for America. I had to go with him somewhere. We were walking through a small alley, along which he always used to walk while living in Paris. (Now I always walk along this narrow and dear street.) As we were walking, he suddenly stopped and said, "Zina, I want to say something to you."

Actually at this moment I was thinking how fortunate I was to have managed to save up 100 francs and to have been able without any difficulty to buy and do all that was needed for his arrival. (I always wanted to do everything myself. I know it is egotistic.) And then he continued, "Soon it will be your nameday, and since I will not be able to greet you in person, I want to give you this now." And he handed me paper money, which turned out to be the exact sum I had spent on him—100 francs! I immediately thought that he had probably read my mind and thought that I regretted spending that money on him. I wanted to return this money to him, but then it seemed to me best not to do so, for otherwise I would hurt that dear man. So I accepted the money with gratitude.

21. THE LAST FAREWELL

On the day of his departure, Blessed John was in our church for his last farewell.

There was no one there except for him and myself. We went downstairs. I made coffee. He drank some and then, before going up, looked around all our lower quarters and said, "The first thing that ought to be done is to fix this place, gather young people, and form a Brotherhood and conduct here lectures and meetings."

Then we went up into the church. Blessed John entered the altar, opened the holy doors and prayed for a long time before the altar table. Then he came out from the holy doors, directed his glance at me, and with cryptic gestures took his bishop's staff which stood next to the icon of the Saviour. With the same strange gestures, looking straight at me, he placed it at the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God at the iconostasis. Then he returned to the altar and again prayed for a long time. What was the meaning of that, I wondered, for it was definitely symbolic. Perhaps that indicated that a women's convent was to be here? Then he again came out from the altar, took the staff, placed it far away in the corner and affixed it with a little piece of wire. This is where his staff has remained up to today. Then he closed the holy gates, came out from the altar and, standing in the middle of the church, kept looking all around, saying, "No, nothing should be changed in the church."

"Your Eminence," I then said, "I love our church very much, but unfortunately it is so small."

"And soon even this will seem big," Blessed John answered. "And in general,

our Church soon will remain such a tiny one," and he pointed to the very tip of his middle finger. And again he looked in all directions, saying, "No, nothing should be changed in the church."

Then he came to a candlestand next to the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, and I came up also, wanting to say to him several things.

"Your Eminence," I said, "because of me there are many troubles here in church and I really do not know why. It seems to me that it would be much better if I would leave the church duties and would come only to pray peacefully. This would be better both for me and less temptation for others."

Suddenly he became very grave, as I had never seen him before. He began to hit the candlestand with his fist and yelled at me, "I tell you, stay at your post!" And this he repeated three times. I was petrified and did not know what to say, and at this our conversation ended. Soon they came for him in order to take him to the airport. I also wanted to go to see him off as I used to do in the past. I approached him to ask a blessing for it. But instead, without answering me, he went with quick steps to the cliros reading stand. I followed. There he found the Horologion, opened it, and pointed with his finger to the service of the Ninth Hour. I began to read the Ninth Hour and was unable to even see him off, not only to the airport, but even to the door. I remained at my post. And that is all I saw of my dearly-beloved Blessed John.

One of those who went with Blessed John to the airport described the scene there: "Those of us who saw him during the last year of his life could clearly observe how he was melting away before our eyes, how his strength was leaving, how all his energy was being drained by the persecution. He was in such a terrible state that it was apparent what the persecution was doing to him. For the last year before his death he was unrecognizable. He was often very serious. Being clairvoyant, he of course knew that he was leaving us forever, but we did not know this. I saw him off at the airport and was even allowed to accompany him into the plane. He was especially serious; he could not even talk. When I told him just before entering the plane, 'Please look back, your flock is looking at you with love,' he turned around sadly and three times blessed us all for the last time. And we never saw him again. Early that summer one of his spiritual sons received a letter from him, stating, 'If you hear that I have died, know that I was killed.' And shortly thereafter we heard the sad news that our dear Blessed John died."

As a rule I would never go to sleep at night when I knew that Blessed John would be flying away, since I knew the exact time when his airplane would fly over our house and he would unfailingly bless the city from above. And so this night also I waited until midnight and saw him off after all in that way, and then went to bed and fell asleep. And I saw a beautiful dream. I saw

that Blessed John was indeed flying, not in an airplane, but just simply by himself in the air; and in the air waved his monastic mantle, with which he was covering our church by his prayerful protection. That was his last trip to us.

There was a lady I knew who had very serious trouble with her legs. After services she would always sit on the lower steps of our staircase, waiting for Blessed John to come out from church. And once she said to him, "Oh, your Eminence, I will die soon."

To this he smiled and said, "No, I will die before you." And it came about just as he said. He died on June 19/July 2nd, 1966, and she died just a few days after.

22. MY SON VLADIMIR

Not long before his departure, Blessed John entrusted into my care his beloved orphan Vladimir, whose official guardian he was. A long time ago he once told me, "Little Vladimir could be saved if he had his own family." He did not say anything else then, but I at once perceived with my heart and intuition that he wanted to say by this that I should accept him as my own son. And since then it remained in my heart as my most treasured desire. And so this last time he told me that I should take the boy and that I should write to him about all my needs and difficulties, and he would guide me with his advice. But soon after that Blessed John reposed and it became for me unbearably difficult because I had no one to whom I could turn for help.

Little Vladimir was accepted in my family reluctantly and with little friendliness, because my mother and my uncle were both already old and it seemed to them that it was beyond their strength. This, of course, promised nothing good, since all kinds of difficulties arose from the very beginning. Mother thought that it was too trying for them, and that for me it was also the cause of too much stress. In general, poor Vladimir found himself in a very difficult situation, but I, unfortunately, was in no better one. I was between two fires and had to balance carefully so as to agitate neither one nor the other side. It began to make my health deteriorate. I became nervous and it was very difficult, to say the least. I felt that I acted as my conscience and my heart dictated, my heart being prompted by Blessed John. Everyone gave me conflicting advice which I could not fulfill. And if I did not satisfy them, then new problems arose. Finally, I reached such a state that it seemed to me that if Blessed John would not help I would not be able to continue.

And so once I spent the whole night crying and praying to Blessed John. Finally I said, "Look, Blessed John, if you will not come and bless me to continue in the way I feel best in my heart, to not be confused with all these advisers while not knowing which side to take, then I will have to abandon this godly work and I don't know what will happen to poor Vladimir."

By morning I fell asleep and I saw a dream: the doorbell rings and I am running

to open the door because I think that it is Blessed John. I open the door and, sure e-nough, it is him! He comes into the hallway. The kitchen door opens up and out of there peeks Mother, Uncle and Vladimir. But Blessed John does not pay any attention to them. He comes straight to me. I fall down to his feet and he blesses me. Then I get up and he goes away.

I woke up from the ringing of the door-bell. I jumped out of bed and opened the door. The mailman brought me a package, which I opened and saw a magazine in English, *The Orthodox Word* (no. 11, 1966, dedicated entirely to Archbishop John). On the cover was a picture of a snow-clad cemetery and amidst the crosses our Blessed John was walking, exactly as I had just seen him in my dream. And on the cover of the magazine was a handwritten note, "To Zina."

I was so uplifted by this and such a joyful feeling came over me in my difficult work! From that day on I made a resolve to pay no attention to people's opinions and only be guided by the feeling of my own heart. And God helped me through the prayers of the Righteous One from the world above.

To be perfectly frank, I must say that I never felt his absence. Ever since his first departure, when he told us in his short sermon, delivered in our church, that there is no distance between people who have only the *one thing needful* as their guiding principle and so have oneness of soul. And even after his death I appeal to Blessed John as to a living person, and he always lets me know

that he is nearby, that he hears and that he helps me.

23. FREE TRAPEZA MEALS

I had to endure a lot of difficulties working in church, but Blessed John always helped me. I distinctly remember one incident which occurred before his last departure. When we were walking together along a little alley, he gave me money for my nameday gift to be spent on myself. At the same time he told me this: "Zina, you should continue your work with the free trapeza meals." This was in connection with our charitable work in preparing free meals in our church after services for all who served in the altar, those who would come from afar, all the old folks and communicants, and, of course, those who could not afford a meal. At that time he even gave me ten francs for this purpose. I continued doing what Blessed John encouraged me to do—I tried, in any case. But evidently I overdid trying, because I spent everything I had, and more. I began to borrow money, which turned out to be not such a small sum as I had anticipated: seventy dollars.

By that time I was regularly receiving from the "Archbishop John Fund" twenty dollars every month which I could have used for this work of philanthropy. But such a sum of money was not enough. My debt already began to make itself known, to say the least. Contemplating the burden of my debts, I was walking one night home from church past a bank where Blessed John used to go often, and I not only thought, but said to

him aloud, "Blessed John, I have been doing faithfully what you told me to do for a long time now, and you see what trouble I have gotten myself into. Help me out; pull me out of this mess!" So I spoke to him for a while, came home and went to bed. In the morning I woke up to the ringing of the door bell. The mailman handed me a letter from the "Archbishop John Fund."

"Glory to God!" I thought to myself, "I will get my twenty dollars as soon as I can cash my check in that very bank, and then only fifty dollars to go. I'll get it somehow. I'll be able to lessen my seventy-dollar debt." I opened the latter and—oh, my surprise! There wasn't just twenty dollars, but a whole seventy! From this surprise I remember I even jumped from joy and immediately ran to cash the check and then quickly paid off all my debts. Then I wrote a letter to the Fund, in which I thanked them for such a generous gift. But I never received from them any explanation why they sent this particular sum. The next month I again received the usual twenty-dollar check.

Up to today I have saved that receipt as a reminder that this money was sent to me personally from my dear Blessed John.

24. POSTHUMOUS GRATITUDE

Blessed John would console me by even appearing in dreams to others. I used to have great difficulties in church, being forced to hear a lot of bad talk about Blessed John. Although I tried to please everyone, I could not be silent in this and tried to de-

fend him. I suffered very much because of all this. Besides, I had a lot of problems at home and elsewhere, and I was totally exhausted.

Once I came to church and again I heard something very hurting about our saint, as well as some insults directed personally to me. Unable to endure it any longer, I burst out crying. I just stood there and wept. I felt so heavy. At this moment Alexey's brother, Seryozha, came in and saw that I was crying. Perhaps he had also heard those tales and words which referred to me. "Zina," he told me, "do not cry. All this is nonsense. Listen to what I saw in my dream today! I saw that Blessed John bowed down to your feet."

I was petrified at this, because it seemed to me so incredible. Such a joy at once appeared in my heart. I forgot all my troubles, all my little turmoils, because these are all such trifles and we only imagine them to be so immense. And Blessed John, knowing that I was in such a silly and useless state of mind, wanted to console me by having this unusual dream related to me at that moment.

25. ST. SERGIUS OF RADONEZH

I often bother Blessed John with pleas for help. It used to happen that I would say, "Blessed John, help me to get somehow a little bit of money, but only that it would be for me *personally*, to avoid unnecessary talk. And would you believe it? Hardly would a day pass, and sometimes even right away, I would

get a letter in which there would be a check with a note, or even right on the check, there would be clearly stated: "Zina, this is for you personally." How remarkable! Blessed John would send me what I requested through people and even give them the thought to write "for you personally." This happened many times.

His closeness was also remarkable in other ways, even after his death. Here are two more incidents, which occurred on the same day:

1. It was in September, 1966, on the eve of the feast of St. Sergius of Radonezh. At our church there was no vigil service that day, because our priest was absent. I wanted at least to light the vigil lamps for the Saint, but, alas, I had no oil left. By chance I looked at the table where I had Blessed John's portrait, and I glanced at him with a plea: "Oh, how I would have liked to light all the lamps in church on the Saint's day!" That was all I said, and, since I had to go out, I got dressed and went downstairs. As I came out, I almost stumbled into a lady, my dear old friend, coming to me with a package in her arms. Seeing me, she exclaimed, "My dear Zina, I'm bringing some oil for you." What happiness! I thanked her and ran to light the lamps in church.

2. Having lit the lamps in church, I was returning with thanksgiving to God and His glorious Saints in my heart. On my way I was to pass a store where among other old things an icon of St. Sergius of Radonezh was for sale. During the course of three

years I had wanted to acquire it, but unfortunately I never could afford it. I had wanted to give it as a gift to Blessed John on his nameday. I liked the icon a lot, and often stopped at the store to admire it and pray before it. And so it continued year after year. All this time I was hoping that the store owner would give me a discount on it, but he would not.

And so, that evening being the eve of the feast of St. Sergius, I again stopped in front of the window of that store. The store was closed. I crossed myself and thought, "What a wonderful icon, the Saint looks as if he were alive, as if he were blessing me." And I instinctively bowed down as if taking his blessing in actuality. I walked away regretting that I had never been able to give it to Blessed John. And spontaneously I began to cry to him in my mind: "My dearest Blessed John, make a miracle, that I obtain this icon. I'll place it in your cell." And so I went on my way.

Ten minutes later I had to return by way of the same street and I noticed that the store was open now, although it was very late. I crossed the street and entered the store, hoping to have a chance to venerate the icon, when the proprietor, greeting me with a smile, said, "Well, have you decided to acquire that icon?"

"I don't think so, since I don't have the necessary sum of money."

"And how much can you afford?" he asked, to which I indicated exactly half the price. He at once, to my astonishment, took

the icon and gave it to me! Besides, I did not have with me at that time even that sum of money, but he trusted me nevertheless. I pressed the icon to my heart and ran away glorifying God and His Saints.

26. RECORDING THE MIRACLES

About a year later, one late evening while in church, I looked at Blessed John's portrait and said, "I feel so guilty before you. I received so many miracles from you and up to now I have not properly recorded even a single incident of your wondrous works and sent them to California (via Father Mitrophan to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood). But that is not because I did not want to, but because I never have the opportunity—either I am in a hurry, or when I do have a free moment I am just incapable of doing this. You'll simply have to forgive me for that." Thus I finished lamenting over my sin before him and went home.

Early in the morning I had to go to Lesna Convent. As I arrived there and was entering through the Convent gates, I saw Abbess Theodora coming out to the porch. Seeing me, she joyfully exclaimed, "Zina, look, here is your story!" She raised her hand, in which she held some white paper. Having approached the dear Abbess, I took her blessing and she handed to me a Russian-language magazine, well-known to me, *Pravoslavny Blagovestnik* (*Orthodox Tidings*, no. 6, 1967), on the cover of which was Archbishop John's portrait, taken when he was still a young bishop in Shanghai. I wondered, what

kind of "story" could it be? I opened it, and on page 105 I saw my story about the St. Sergius icon I just described. What a surprise! Only the day before I had asked Blessed John to forgive me for being unable to write about the miracles he performs all the time. And the following day a proof was in my hand. Not even a day passed before he revealed such a remarkable answer, and without my doing.

Every time that Blessed John manifests to me his "holy doings" in order to confirm that they are from him, they are always accompanied by either his photographs or something else which reminds one of him. I used to receive this magazine over the course of many years, yet this was the only time after his death that this magazine had his photograph accompanying my story. Now that I am sick in the hospital I am free of all care and am able to record his miraculous doings. Glory be to God for everything and for such holy men as our Blessed John.

(*Editor's Note*: Father Mitrophan moved to San Francisco just prior to Blessed John's repose. The Father Herman Brotherhood, which was founded by righteous Archbishop John, kept asking Father Mitrophan for biographical information on their founder, which he kept promising to give us once he got it from Paris, but nothing came. Then once he received a private letter from Zinaida Julem and he gave it for us to publish, which we did on the pages of our Russian language periodical *Orthodox Tidings*. We placed Blessed John's portrait on the cover since the

whole issue was dedicated to him. In the same issue we published some interesting material from an Australian booklet by Archimandrite Benjamin Garshin, which gives a clearer picture concerning the persecution of Blessed John.)

27. MIRACULOUS HELP

Once I was in bed sick. At that time Blessed John lived not too far from us. That particular day I knew he would be serving in the morning, but on the morrow he would be gone to Brussels and be away for a long time. I wanted to receive Holy Communion very much, but I was so sick that I was in no condition to get out of bed. I attempted many times without success to get up, but positively was bedridden. I kept praying and hoping, when finally I gathered all my strength and with great difficulty was finally able to get up, get dressed and come out. I was barely able to reach church, get up the steps and enter the side room next to the church altar, where Blessed John was serving.

He stood with his back to the door and already had the chalice in his hands ready for communicating the believers. In despair, I thought that I was too late to receive Holy Communion and knelt behind the analogion in the middle of the church which hid me from the sight of the holy bishop. Blessed John did not see me—he physically could not have. And I began to cry quietly, that I would be deprived of Holy Communion because it was too late. All of a sudden I heard his voice,

"Zina, would you like to receive Holy Communion?"

You cannot imagine what I experienced at that moment! He knew again with his spirit! What gratitude I had towards God and Blessed John that he heard my soul's desire in his spirit. He confessed and communicated me and I left the church absolutely healthy! Remarkable, when just recently I was so absolutely sick.

Another similar healing occurred on Great Passion Saturday, when a huge red spot and swelling of veins appeared on my leg. I could not walk and was in terrible pain. At home my mother was also sick, and in church I had a lot to do before Pascha. What was I to do? At once I turned to Blessed John, "Please, help me." I barely reached home from church, went to bed and fell asleep. In the morning I woke up, and there was no trace of the red swelling. I could walk and there was no pain. Was it not a miracle?

28. HEALTH THROUGH PRAYER

1. Once, when Blessed John was still with us in France, I needed a good job and with his help got a position at the home of one fine lady who had a huge dog. Her mother, a very old lady, came one day to visit her daughter, and the dog, out of joy, jumped at the old lady and she fell and broke her hip. They took her to the hospital and the doctors said that she would hardly recover because she was so weak. Then I ran to Blessed John and asked for his prayers. He

promised to pray. Soon after that, the old lady began to feel much better and gradually got absolutely well and lived for many years.

2. Already after the repose of Blessed John the landlady I worked for herself got sick. I ran quickly to church and had a panikhida served for our Righteous One. Her illness got serious, since they found a malignant growth in the kidneys and the doctors were very pessimistic about her condition. I had three panikhidas served for Blessed John. Soon after that they made an analysis and did not find anything. And she also recovered like her mother and is still up to today in good health, thanks be to God.

3. This same lady I worked for had a good friend who had a young sister. This girl was planning to get married, when all of a sudden her middle finger began to swell up and then got red and pained her terribly. This, of course, interfered with her wedding plans. The finger ached terribly and the doctors were using all kinds of treatments, but nothing helped her. A whole year passed. Finally they examined again and discovered that it was cancer. Everybody, of course, became very alarmed and did not know what to do. I, however, ran to church, had a panikhida served for our dear Blessed John and begged him to help this poor girl. Thus I had three panikhidas served. The finger of this young maiden began slowly to heal and soon it healed completely. Now she is married and has two little children.

29. REMOVAL OF A WART

Here is another remarkable case. Helen Pavlova, when still a young girl, loved Blessed John very much. Once when he was still alive, she came to me and said, "Aunt Zina, I have a wart on the sole of my foot which I cannot get rid of except by surgery. But I am afraid of surgery. Tomorrow I must go to the hospital for this operation. Everything is arranged, but I will not go because I am so afraid."

"Why didn't you ask Blessed John to pray for you? And then you could have peacefully gone for the operation?" I asked her.

In her childlike simplicity she then and there prayed to him. She not only petitioned him that the operation be successful, but simply asked that she could avoid the surgery altogether. She did not even write to him, just simply mentally asked him for help. And at that very moment her wart just disappeared and never appeared again. Just like that! And she never had to have any surgery!

Blessed John prophesied to this same girl that she would be a priest's wife, a matushka. When he was with us the last time, she came to him just before his departure, talked for a long time and then asked, "Can I marry a young Frenchman who is very nice and now is courting me?" Blessed John bowed his head to the side, smiled his childlike smile and said, "You will be a matushka." Then he was silent for a while and added,

"Only you are to marry a Russian." And soon she indeed became a matushka.

30. HEALING FROM CANCER

Every time that I have a panikhida served for Blessed John, I ask him that he pray to God for a specific reason and he hears me. He hears all. I remember how, when Blessed John was leaving us, he told me, "Zina, when you or someone else gets sick, let me know at once." And when he left us for another world, I thought, "What am I going to do without him and his help?" But then I figured it out: panikhidas could be served for him as petitions, and he should be asked for his holy prayers as if he were alive. And he hears and helps.

Recently in our church there was such a case. One day one of our parishioners, a deeply believing man, rushed in for help. He was married to a Frenchwoman and had three children. The oldest, his 16 year old daughter, recently was in our church and seemed to be such a blossoming, healthy young lady. It turned out that she hurt her side somehow and soon after a huge swelling, the size of an apple, appeared. They took her to the hospital and the doctors found that it was cancerous and removed it. But it turned out to be not only external, but also internal, and already affected part of her lung. When the doctors discovered this, they said that it was a hopeless case and that only a miracle could save her. That's when the father in despair rushed to church and asked our priest for prayers. When the

father left, I asked the priest to serve a panikhida for Blessed John and we prayed together.

After several days, the father telephoned and asked that our priest visit his daughter in the hospital. He went, and when he returned he told us that the doctors now said that there was hope that she would recover.

How many miracles occur as the result of the prayers of our Blessed John! In truth, amongst us was a great Saint, and the merciful God vouchsafed me, a great sinner, to be a witness to that.

Wondrous is God, the God of Israel!

Zinaida V. Julem
Paris, Summer, 1978

Chapter 8

Blessed John in the Netherlands

His Veneration by the Dutch Orthodox Church Today

Unfortunately, I never met Archbishop John Maximovitch myself, because I only became acquainted with the Orthodox Church in 1975. Still, I have the feeling I know him personally, because our church at the Hague is filled with his blessed memory and his presence is felt in everything: the way the services go on; the sayings of our Archbishop Jacob and Archimandrite Adriaan (whose spiritual father he was); his icon in our Church, his vestments (beautiful silk Chinese ones) and his prayer rope still used by our Archbishop Jacob.

But let me start from the beginning.

Very long ago, in the beginning of the 18th century, there was a presence of the Orthodox Church in the Netherlands. Tsar

Peter the Great, who stayed for a while in the Netherlands, in 1697 founded a small church in Amsterdam on behalf of Russian sailors. How the little church looked and where it stood is unknown.

In 1763, the "three falcons," a house in Amsterdam, was converted into a church, the "Russian-Greek Church of St. Catherine." It lasted until 1865. Permanent presence of Orthodoxy in the Netherlands started later with the marriage of King William II to the Russian Princess Anna Pavlovna, daughter of Tsar Paul I in 1816. She did not become a Protestant, as the whole Dutch royal family is, but held to her Orthodox faith. In the beginning she frequented the Church at Amsterdam, but later founded the parish of St. Mary Magdalene at the Hague, which still exists. It was first in the palace chapel Rustenburg-Zorguliet, and later, in 1911 (after Queen Anna Pavlovna died) in a house at Baserlstreet. After the Revolution of 1917, Russian refugees joined the parish, which after Russian financial aid stopped, was very poor. In 1937, with help from a special Dutch Committee to aid the Russian parish, a new Church was built at Obrechtstreet, still dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene. At that time the priest was Hieromonk Dionissy Loekine, who came from Paris, under the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris. In 1938, the first two converts of Dutch origin joined the Russian Orthodox Church. More followed soon as a result of the talks on Holy Orthodoxy, which Father Dionissy held in several towns.

He also made a start with the translation of the Orthodox Service books into the Dutch language, which was in 1944 officially recognized as a liturgical language by Metropolitan Evlogy. Parishes were founded in Amsterdam and Heerlem.

In 1945, the Orthodox Church of the Netherlands also became the victim of the jurisdictional quarrels which had risen in the Orthodox diaspora. Hieromonk Dionissy followed Metropolitan Evlogy, who returned to the Moscow Patriarchate. Part of the believers could not follow this step of Father Dionissy and founded another parish at the Hague under the jurisdiction of the Synod of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. The Church in Exile also founded parishes at Amsterdam and, in 1955, at Arnhem. These parishes also attracted Dutch converts. A small group of Orthodox belonged to the Paris jurisdiction of the Russian Archdiocese of Western Europe under the Patriarch of Constantinople, with parishes at Maastricht, Devenker, and a small monastery at Mill-St.-Hubert.

After 1945, a new stream of emigrants from Russia arrived in our country who settled mostly in and around Rotterdam. That was the reason why Hieromonk Dionissy founded a parish at Rotterdam, first on a boat, later in a house-church. In 1959, this church was dedicated to the Mother of God *Quick to Hear* by Nicolai of Clichy, patriarchal exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, with the assistance of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom of London. In 1966, Archimandrite Dionissy was ordained in Moscow as auxiliary bishop

in Rotterdam to Archbishop Basil of Brussels. Bishop Dionissy died in 1976. In the meantime, however, important changes had been arranged in the Moscow jurisdiction. In 1971, Bishop Jacob of the Dutch Orthodox Church became head of the Moscow Patriarchate parishes.

Bishop Jacob (Akkevsdike), originally a Benedictine monk of the Roman Catholic Church, was received in 1940 into the Russian Orthodox Church, together with his friend and fellow-monk Adriaan, by Archimandrite Dionissy. In 1946, they founded the first Dutch language parish, the Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist, followed in 1954 by the Monastery of St. John the Baptist. The chief purpose of the Monastery has been the Orthodox mission to the Dutch people, translating the Divine Service books into Dutch, and celebrating the entire daily cycle of services in the Dutch language according to the Typicon.

In 1950, Fr. Adriaan unfortunately became ill with tuberculosis and was sent to Switzerland to convalesce until 1953. He used that time for making translations of the Orthodox services into Dutch. The Divine Liturgy and the services of Vespers and Matins, together with other rites from the Orthodox service books, translated into the Dutch language and carried out in the usual Orthodox manner, have all been found appropriate to the worshipping needs of Dutch congregations.

This gigantic labor of translation ended in 1984, when the last book, the General

Menaion, was translated into Dutch, so that the Dutch Orthodox Church now has a complete library of the Divine Service books in Dutch at her disposal. It is with this Church and Monastery that Vladika John Maximovitch has been involved.

In 1952, being Archbishop of Brussels and Western Europe, Archbishop John unexpectedly visited the Dutch Orthodox Monastery on his own initiative. He inspected the whole church, the altar and all that was on it, the Service books, the icons. He stayed for an hour or more and seemed very pleased with the missionary labors of Fathers Jacob and Adriaan. He offered to help, if necessary.

"He had said that we could go to him if ever we were in difficulties," writes Archbishop Jacob of the Hague, "and in 1953 we were. Our work was misunderstood. And I was alone, as Father Adriaan was in a Swiss sanatorium. There he met Russian children on holiday with a nun from the Lesna Convent in France. They also knew Archbishop John and so we went to see him in Versailles. In December 1953, we asked to be accepted under his omophorion, as he was then Archbishop of Brussels and Western Europe. This was accepted in January 1954."

"We are grateful for all he did for our Church. An icon of him is in our Church by the table for the dead, and he is always named as founder."

Archbishop John took the Dutch Orthodox Church under his omophorion, starting a long and friendly contact that has been

very fruitful and a blessing for the Dutch Church. He was a wonderful spiritual father to Hegumen Jacob and Father Adriaan. He had much understanding for the missionary churches in general and promoted their work in every way he could. His omophorion meant a real protection to the Dutch Church. He defended the use of the Dutch language and adaptations to the Dutch situation. Everybody who has known him from that period remembers him as a saint. He was much help in times when sickness, poverty and other troubles tempted the vulnerable monastery. When visiting the Netherlands, he always stayed in the monastery, where he felt completely at home. In 1962, he tonsured Mother Ioanna, who is the eldest in the community. He also took the inhabitants of the monastery to the Lesna Convent of the Mother of God in France, which became like a motherhouse for them. Much was learned of his prayerful and ascetic life, which left an everlasting impression on the Dutch Church. His directions and comments on the typicon are still followed up to this day. His love for people, especially for the children, is remembered with deep emotion. We will always remain thankful to have known him and to have been loved by him. And we trust that this love will still work for us now that he is praying in intercession to our Lord and Saviour, whose loyal servant he has been in his earthly life. On September 19, 1965, at the instigation of Archbishop John, Archimandrite Jacob was elected and consecrated Bishop of the Hague and the Netherlands by Metro-

politan Philaret of New York—the first Dutch Orthodox bishop—in the Brussels Cathedral of St. Job the Long-Suffering.

After Vladika John Maximovitch died on July 2, 1966, in Seattle, understanding of the Dutch mission under the Synod of the Russian Church Outside of Russia unfortunately became less and less. After a time of trouble the Dutch Orthodox Church returned in 1971 to the Moscow Patriarchate and Bishop Jacob (later Archbishop) became the head of the Dutch diocese, following Bishop Dionissy. At this moment the Church has several parishes and the Monastery in the Hague, and parishes in Amsterdam, Groningen, Amersfoort and Rotterdam.

Here I have to finish my survey of the Orthodox Church in the Netherlands. As you can see, the Dutch Orthodox Church underwent all the troubles and the temptations of the jurisdictional quarrels which seem to be imposed on every Orthodox Church of the diaspora. As for the future, we hope to be able to develop our Church in peace and holiness, not troubled by political and jurisdictional attacks. We pray for the unity and the independence of the Orthodox Church in Europe, but I think that this will all be a long way off.

The veneration and love of the Orthodox Dutch for Vladika was summed up in the Foreword written by Bishop Jacob to their *Life of Archbishop John* (Autumn, 1966):

"This edition is dedicated in the first place to the memory of our suddenly deceased Archbishop John. We thought we could honor

him best by sending you all a picture of 'our Vladika' taken in our church during Holy Liturgy. It is very characteristic and everyone who knew him will see right away that this is Vladika John. The picture was taken during Liturgy on Holy Spirit Monday, when he consecrated me Abbot. He was only seventy when he died, completely alone, as he had always been alone since he became bishop. He did things his own way, prayed all the services each day, celebrated Holy Liturgy, whether he was on a train, a ship, or in a hospital. And if he couldn't do it himself because he was ill, a priest had to come and celebrate in his room. He was known and highly honored all over the world. Even in Paris, the man who gives the signal for the train to leave the station used to wait because the 'Russian Archbishop' was arriving.

"He was known in all European hospitals as the bishop who sat praying with the dying even when it lasted all night. He was called to the bedside of the very ill to pray, whether they were Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox or anything else, because when he prayed, God was merciful.

"He died on July 2nd, suddenly, falling asleep in his prayers. 'We have no father now.' This cry was heard in the whole Church, all over the world. The Dutch Orthodox Church is also orphaned and has no protector on earth. But he is a powerful protector of our small church by God. The last thing he did was personally send me his Easter vestments and mitre. There was no answer to my thank you letter.

"I no longer have a spiritual father, and won't have another, anyway not one like him, who phoned me in the middle of the night to say: 'Go to bed now; what you are praying for will be granted.'

"Vladika, thank you for everything, and remember us, your Dutch Orthodox Church, by God's Throne."

Fr. Martin Erlings

Some Personal Memories

by Hegumen Adriaan
1966

Archbishop John is honored as the Founder of the Netherlands Orthodox Church, and the first Life of him to appear after his death was in the Dutch-language periodical of this Church (the article that follows appeared in the same issue). Later, the major Life to date of Vladika was translated in full into Dutch and printed in the same organ.*

Vladika John, nicknamed Shanghaisky, was a person of the type one longs to meet, even if it is only for once in a lifetime. When then such a meeting has become reality, the remembrance remains unforgettable. He was literally a unique personality, completely his own type, because many characteristics, in themselves already rare, were united in him to an exceptional degree.

Still ever do I see before me how he came to look us up in our church about fifteen years ago. To the eye he made no great

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* See Chapter 2 above.

impression: small, a dumpy figure, an irregular face in a mess of tangled head and beard hairs. A serious speech impediment made him extremely difficult to understand, even though he spoke German, French, and English. But he did not say much. Very calm, without taking any notice of the people who were waiting for him, he inspected the whole church. He went to kiss the altar and looked in detail at and into everything that was on it. After that he studied one by one the surrounding icons and the books, the printed as well as the handwritten ones. After a full hour he made his departure: he had wanted to make acquaintance with the Dutch priests, and when we had difficulties we had only to make our way to him.

A year later we indeed had serious ecclesiastical difficulties. After having for a long time made fruitless attempts in various directions, we decided to hazard a chance with him also. That was the beginning of a long and friendly relationship that has been full of blessing, both for us personally and for the Netherlands Church, which he then took under his omophorion. For with him this meant that he really took us under his protection as well, and he generously defended us against all the attacks which from lack of understanding and sometimes even out of ill-will were levelled at the young and vulnerable community.

In this way we also received the opportunity of learning to know him better, including his unbelievable way of life. For he often came visiting, and during his visitations of

the Russian Church in the Netherlands he always used to stay with us in the monastery, where he felt completely at home. Furthermore, we were repeatedly with him in France, in the monastery of Lesna or in his room at the Russian Cadet Corps in Versailles.

What struck one first of all was his unbelievably strict asceticism. It was as if a desert saint out of the first centuries had come to life again. Never did he go to bed; he even possessed no bed. On some occasions, during heavy illness, he was nursed somewhere else. He slept in short snatches, sometimes for a few minutes while standing praying, at night for a few hours sitting upright in a chair and—very disturbing for many—for a few minutes also during a conversation which did not interest him, but of which nevertheless he never lost the thread of the discussion. He used to walk barefoot, even over the sharp gravel of the park at Versailles. Later this was forbidden him by the Metropolitan, after serious blood-poisoning through a piece of glass. He took only one meal a day, towards midnight—at least when that was looked after for him; otherwise he omitted that also.

But still much more impressive was the living example of his prayer. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily, however few people there were present. At this service he took much time over the preparation of the Gifts. The diskos was full to overflowing because of the many commemorations. From every pocket he pulled out pieces of paper with names,

and every day new ones were added out of letters from all parts of the world in which people asked for his prayers, especially for the sick. In addition, he kept a sharp image in his memory of each of the many people whom he had met in his active life. He knew and understood their needs and that was already a comfort. At the Great Entrance with the Gifts he began again, with the commemorations that had been sent inside to him in the meantime, so that the choir sometimes had to repeat the Cherubikon three times. After the Divine Liturgy he was still for hours in the church. With minute care he cleansed the chalice and diskos, the table of preparation and the altar. At the same time he ate some prosphora and drank much hot water.

He did the different Hours of Prayer aloud, wherever he happened to be, often standing in the train or on a ship, in between the other passengers (for he travelled much). He read the morning mail in the afternoon, after the Divine Liturgy, but a trusted person had to open his letters in order to see whether there were any urgent intentions. Sometimes he gave announcements of the contents beforehand, even of affairs about which he had heard nothing for a long time. He took strict care that in church and especially in the altar nothing was said about anything else than what related to the service.

His attention went out in the first place to the sick and the lonely, whom he visited even in the remotest places. For this he carried on a strap around his neck a flat leather

case with a heavy icon of the Mother of God, a copy of the wonderworking Icon of Kursk, which the emigrant Church had brought with it out of Russia. There he sang with his broken voice at the sick man's side the little office of the Mother of God (Moleben) and eventually brought the Holy Communion as well.

His preference went for children whom he so readily had around him. He always informed himself about them, he catechized them, sent them cards and brought presents for them with him. He could look at them in their eyes for minutes at a time with that warm, radiant look, which encompassed you completely, as a mother puts her arms around her baby.

This look is something unforgettable for everyone who came in contact with him. As badly as he could express himself in words, so were his eyes full of meaning. A chance bodily contact made one think of something hard and massive, like a knotty tree trunk. But if he looked at you, then you knew yourself for that moment to be the most loved person in the world.

Naturally, many who only knew him superficially were offended at his appearance. He knew no way of outward worthiness, he was under all circumstances only himself: the monk who thought only of prayer and the needs of those in trouble. But much greater is the number of those who admired him indeed for that and loved him, even though he was tiresome to them with his requests. The story is famous of how he stayed in

Washington for many days in succession in the waiting room of the ministry of external affairs until he extracted the entry permit for his thousands of Russian refugees from China, including the sick, which no one had managed to do previously. Everywhere he went people appeared who wanted to speak with him. If he walked in Paris, then people hurried to him from all sides to ask his blessing and to kiss his hand. Then you saw the elegantly-dressed ladies often first wiping their mouths clean, because they knew that he had a dislike for lipstick. In addition, the train to Dieppe (where the cadet corps had later been housed) left too late from the Gare Saint Lazare on many occaions, because the conductor saw from afar the Russian Monseigneur, who was held up by people every time. Nevertheless, he also often missed trains on his journey, for time was for him but a vague concept.

There would be many other such anecdotes to tell. There is for example that tramp in Lyons, who so enthusiastically told how Vladika John used to walk through Shanghai at night during the difficult years in order to give out bread and money, even to drunkards. That he had never forgotten, with however much bitter criticism he spoke about the others.

In the same way as he lived he has also died, completely unexpectedly, alone in his room, when he had just gone to sit down in order to rest after the church service, during his visit to Seattle, in the far north of his extensive diocese. We shall always be

grateful for having known him and for having been taken up into his wide love. We trust that this bond of love will still work continuously for our good, now that he is yet more directly linked with his Lord, of Whom he had been one of the most faithful servants on earth in our time.

Chapter 9

The Death of a Saint

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. I Cor. 2:9

The unutterable joy and glory of the Kingdom of Heaven, the goal of the Christian life, is partly glimpsed even on earth by those who live the life of grace in the Church of Christ. The vision of Heaven is normally clearest, and the life of grace most intensely felt, on the Radiant Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, with devout reception of Holy Communion. Yet there are times when God grants a special grace to His people, as for instance in connection with a Wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, or with one of His chosen saints.

As those who were present and participated will readily testify, such a special grace was revealed in connection with the recent repose and burial of Archbishop John (Maximovitch) of San Francisco and Western America, of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Everything connected with these events was extraordinary. First of all, the death itself was extraordinary. It occurred in Seattle, where His Eminence had gone for a few days accompanying the miraculous Kursk Icon of the Mother of God, at 3:50 p.m. on Saturday, July 2 (June 19, OS). The death was sudden, yet on this day after celebrating the Divine Liturgy the Archbishop had spent three hours in the altar praying—which was rare even for this man of prayer—and in fact had only shortly before left the church to rest for a few minutes in his room next door when the fatal seizure occurred. Those who ran to his room when they heard him fall report that he died immediately thereafter, peacefully and without pain. These circumstances, together with statements which he had made beforehand, one of them the day before he left for Seattle, make it quite clear that he knew in advance of his approaching death and had prepared himself for it, even as have the great saints throughout the history of the Church of Christ.

Scarcely twenty-four hours later the body arrived in the San Francisco cathedral which he himself had completed. The body was met by the cathedral clergy as it had been when the Archbishop was alive, and there began a vigil that was to last for just over four days. Every day after the morning and evening services a solemn panikhida was served, and the rest of the day until midnight the Gospel was read uninterruptedly by the diocesan clergy. After midnight there was a touching scene: the servers and readers of

the cathedral read the Psalter the whole night, and so the Archbishop was surrounded in death by the young people whom he loved so much, keeping a last vigil with him. This whole time there was a constant procession of people come to bid farewell to their beloved Archpastor.

At each service before the open coffin a sermon by one of the attending hierarchs offered spiritual instruction to the large crowd attending. On Sunday, July 3, Bishop Nektary of Seattle, Vicar of the Archdiocese, invited all to kiss the "relics" of the Archbishop; this term, properly applied to the body of a deceased hierarch, was understood by all to have a more specific application: to the body of a saint. On July 4 Bishop Savva of Edmonton called the Archbishop "blessed" and, more boldly yet, "a wonderworker in his own lifetime," and disclosed that he himself already prayed to him as to a saint. On July 6 Archbishop Averky of Holy Trinity Monastery spoke of the Archbishop's ascetic life, and especially of his extraordinary "battle with sleep" which had caused him *never once to lie down* in all his forty years as a monk, but only to take an hour or two of rest nightly in an uncomfortable position, either sitting up or bent over on the floor praying before icons—a marvel in an age of general spiritual decline. Fittingly, the Archbishop also died in a sitting position, and in fact had expressed the desire to be buried in this position, as were Byzantine hierarchs, but unfortunately this could not be done. On July 7 Metropolitan Philaret, just arrived from New York, noted the Arch-

bishop's "authentic Christian asceticism" and cited him as an "example of true ascetic steadfastness and strictness" unheard of in these evil days.

From the first day of the vigil it was apparent that this was to be no ordinary farewell to the departed, not even for a hierarch. There was a sense of being present at the unfolding of a mystery: the mystery of holiness. Those present were devoutly convinced that they had come to bury a Saint.

In all these days there was an extraordinary outpouring of love. Everyone suddenly discovered himself an orphan, for to each the Archbishop had been the one person most near, most understanding, most loving. Hardened enemies, and there were such, came to beg forgiveness in death of a man who had held no ill-will for them while living.

The vigil was climaxed by the funeral service itself, which was held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 7 (June 24, OS). There were present some five hierarchs (in addition to those mentioned above, there was Archbishop Leonty of Santiago, Chile), 24 priests, innumerable servers, and over 1500 faithful who overflowed the large Cathedral and whose number did not diminish for six hours. The fervor of those who attended the long service which the Church of Christ appoints at the repose of her hierarchs has probably been rarely equalled in this century; it could best be compared with the fervor that is sometimes manifested at the services of Passion Week and Pascha, and the feeling was indeed similar. With sorrow at the passing of this man of God

who had been a loving father to a flock of unnumbered thousands in China, in Europe, and throughout the world, was mingled an anticipation of joy at the gaining of something even greater: a heavenly intercessor. As many, perhaps, as prayed for the repose of his soul had already begun to pray directly *to* him, that he might continue, now in this heavenly abode, his fatherly protection of them. Those who had been closest to him put icons, crosses, flowers, even infants—and several hierarchs their *panagias*—into the coffin, in order to receive them back after contact with the holy body, which even in its sixth day of exposure, without embalming, showed no signs of decay. How appropriate it was that the Cathedral in which he should end his lifelong service to the Church of Christ, and in which he was to find his final resting place, should be dedicated to *The Joy of All Who Sorrow*.

The funeral service was followed by the final kissing of the relics by all present and a procession three times around the Cathedral, the bier being carried by the orphans whom the Archbishop had rescued and raised in Shanghai. This was the culminating point of these solemn days, and it was a veritable triumphal procession. It was as if one were attending, no longer the funeral of a deceased hierarch, but the uncovering of the holy relics of a newly-proclaimed Saint. One of the attending hierarchs noted the similarity to the procession with the Shroud of the Lord on the eve of Passion Saturday. The body was interred in a small basement chapel under the altar, the last "eternal memory" being sung

only after 1 a.m. Within four days, in an unprecedented action, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors amended the city law to permit the burial of prelates in their cathedrals, and the resting place of the Archbishop became final.

Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, in his *Thoughts on Death*, has written: "Have you ever seen the body of a righteous man whose soul has departed? There is no stench from him; one does not fear to approach him. At his burial sorrow is dissolved in a kind of incomprehensible joy." And this, according to Bishop Ignatius, is a sign that "the deceased has obtained mercy and grace with the Lord." All of this was felt by those who devoutly accompanied Archbishop John to his final repose.

But now, when this event and experience of a lifetime have been described, the story of Archbishop John has not even begun to be told. He has already been glorified in the hearts and prayers of those who knew him, and there is daily pilgrimage to his tomb. The faithful were several times reminded during these days of the promise which St. Seraphim of Sarov made before his death, to hear the prayers of those who would come to his grave and speak to him, as if to a living person, of their needs and sorrows; and they were encouraged to do the same at the tomb of Archbishop John. From the time of the burial service not a day has passed but that some of the Archbishop's spiritual children have come to "speak to Vladika," to read the Psalter that

is constantly open before his grave, and to seek his intercession.

And if the life of this righteous man was truly pleasing to God—as we cannot but believe that it was—his remembrance will not be merely local. He was, as one of the priests closest to him called him, "an ascetic-saint of universal significance." For truly his life was the phenomenon of our times: the life of one who was, in effect, a pillar-saint who yet lived in the midst of the world and was accessible to all, and through whose prayers miracles were performed.

To those who have experienced these days, nearness to a Saint has brought understanding of and reinspired devotion to the Saints of God, whom our beloved Vladika himself so greatly venerated. It is they who offer the proof and the example of a life devoted entirely to God. In an age when coldness and carelessness are causing even Orthodox Christians to lose the savor of genuine Christianity, the death of a Saint was a sign and a revelation from Above, renewing in us that contact with the heavenly realms without which there is no spiritual life.

Eugene Rose
1966

Chapter 10

The Sepulchre

Gold Rush fever caused the transformation of a small Roman Catholic missionary outpost into a large city—San Francisco. That spirit of burning passion has never left San Francisco; the spirit of this world has had full sway over it, making it the country's most alluring city, promising worldly pleasures. But likewise, ever since the purchase of Alaska by the United States, San Francisco was also the country's first Orthodox church center and the see of the first Orthodox missionary diocese, whose bishops, with their true pastoral character and their holy deeds of sowing Christ's see, have become living illustrations of St. Paul's words: *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound...* (Romans 5:20).

Today, a century later, these words have become even more applicable. Apart from old vices, within the city satanic services are now openly conducted, and a generation

of his servants is being cultivated. But again the grace of God is sent in such measure to no other city but this one, for here lived a true vessel of the Holy Spirit in the form of a frail and unattractive little man—Archbishop John Maximovitch, who spent his last years in San Francisco and whose relics are enshrined in a sepulchre under the majestic cathedral which he completed in this city.

During his lifetime Archbishop John was regarded as a saint; many people sent requests for his prayers from all over the world, and many testified to obvious miraculous help. After his death his sepulchre became indeed a holy place; thousands of people visit it annually; by mail many request that prayers be said before his tomb; people send for the ends of candles burned before the tomb for them, and also for drops of oil from the vigil lamp burning there. Every year on the anniversary of Vladika's death, June 19 (July 2), the Divine Liturgy is served in the sepulchre; then, despite the early hour (about dawn), the sepulchre is overflowing with the faithful, and virtually all receive Holy Communion.

The Cathedral, with its five golden domes, is dedicated to the miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God, *The Joy of All Who Sorrow*; it is located on Geary Boulevard, between 26th and 27th Avenues, and is a dominating feature of the northwest part of San Francisco, being visible from many parts of town as well as to travellers approaching by ocean or over the Golden Gate Bridge. The Sepulchre is two stories down under the al-

tar. Its walls are adorned with frescos, done in 1967 by the noted icon-painter Pimen Sofronov, who was the first to bring the great iconographic tradition to the New World.

Once you have descended to the lowest basement level, you enter a fairly spacious chapel with a low frescoed ceiling and walls and a glittering marble floor. In the center, surrounded by a myriad of flickering candles, is the sarcophagus, covered by Archbishop John's mantia. At the head of the sarcophagus rests Vladika's mitre, on both sides of which are the pontifical dikirion and trikirion (2 and 3-branched candlesticks for blessing), and above them a ripidion (fan) on either side (held over holy objects during services). His archpastoral staff is attached near the foot of the sarcophagus, and at this end is an analogion where the Psalter is read for the repose of Vladika's soul. On an analogion at the other end of the sarcophagus is the chapel's main icon, brought from China: the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple.

The frescoes painted by Pimen Sofronov include: one on the ceiling, Christ Pantocrator, in a circle over the sarcophagus; on the walls at the sides of the sarcophagus, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ; on the south wall, directly opposite the entrance, the Protection of the Theotokos, with angels on either side; next to this on the east wall the Angel of the Lord announcing the Resurrection of Christ to the Mother of God and the myrrh-bearing women, and on the west wall the Archangel Michael, who was Vladika's patron saint before he became a monk. Between

these large icons are several saints shown in half-stature in ovals: St. John of Tobolsk (Vladika's patron saint), Sts. Boris and Glafira (in memory of Vladika's parents), St. Sergius (for an uncle), and St. Natalia (for his godmother).

Here several nights a week panikhidas are served by local clergy. The oil vigil-lamp on the sarcophagus burns unceasingly. The sepulchre is visited frequently especially by those in various afflictions; they come there to pray for the righteous soul of their beloved Archpastor and ask for his intercession before God. They come with child-like faith just to "complain" of their heartfelt sorrows and misfortunes... And Vladika hears them and grants them help. In Holy Russia, whence he came and whose saints he emulated, in places like this records were kept in special books of testimony of heavenly help granted after prayer with faith to a saint. Several such testimonies, recording Archbishop John's acts of intercession at his sepulchre, are given at the beginning of Part III of this book. May they strengthen the faith of those who are too far away to visit this holy place in person.

Part II

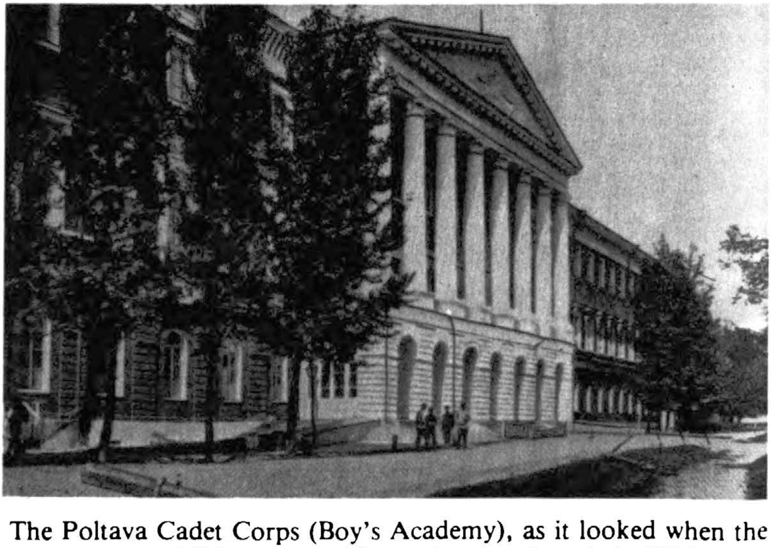
A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY



Misha Maximovitch, the future Archbishop John, at 15.



The beautiful "Sviatogorsky" Monastery, just 8 miles from the Maximovitch estate, where the family of the young Misha spent every summer.



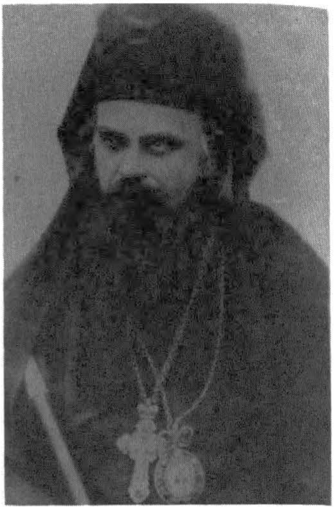
The Poltava Cadet Corps (Boy's Academy), as it looked when the teenager Misha attended it, graduating from it in 1914.



Archbishop John with his parents Boris and Glafira Maximovitch, when he visited them in Caracas, Venezuela in the 1950's.



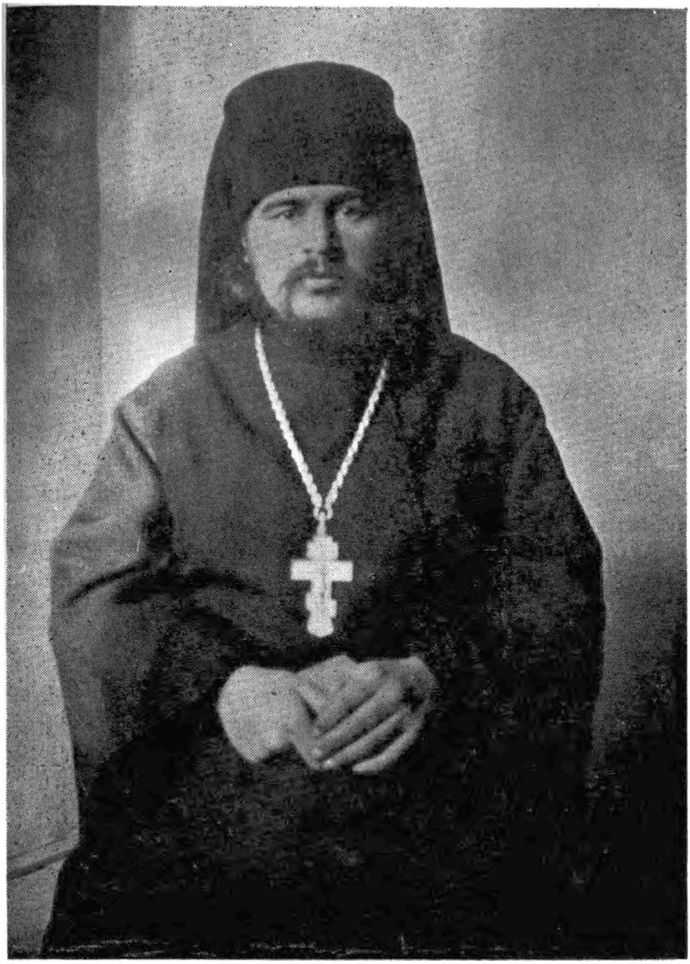
Misha Maximovitch in his early 20's.



Bishop Nicolai Velimirovitch (see pg. 76), who recognized sanctity in the young Hieromonk John



Hieromonk John (center) with Carpatho-Russian students at the Bitol Seminary, 1931.



Hieromonk John in 1927.



Hieromonk John in the Bitol Seminary Infirmary with sick and homeless seminarians, for whom he was the most colorful figure during all their seminary years.



Bishop John in his office in Shanghai.



Bishop John upon his arrival in Shanghai, November, 1934.



Reception of Bishop John in Shanghai, 1934.



Harbin Council of Bishops. Left to right: Bishop Dimitry of Hailar (the father of Metropolitan Philaret of New York), Metropolitan Nestor, Metropolitan Melety of Harbin, Bishop John and Bishop Juvenal, 1935.



With Metropolitan Melety of Harbin, 1939.



The Shanghai Cathedral, built under the direction of Bishop John in the 1930's.



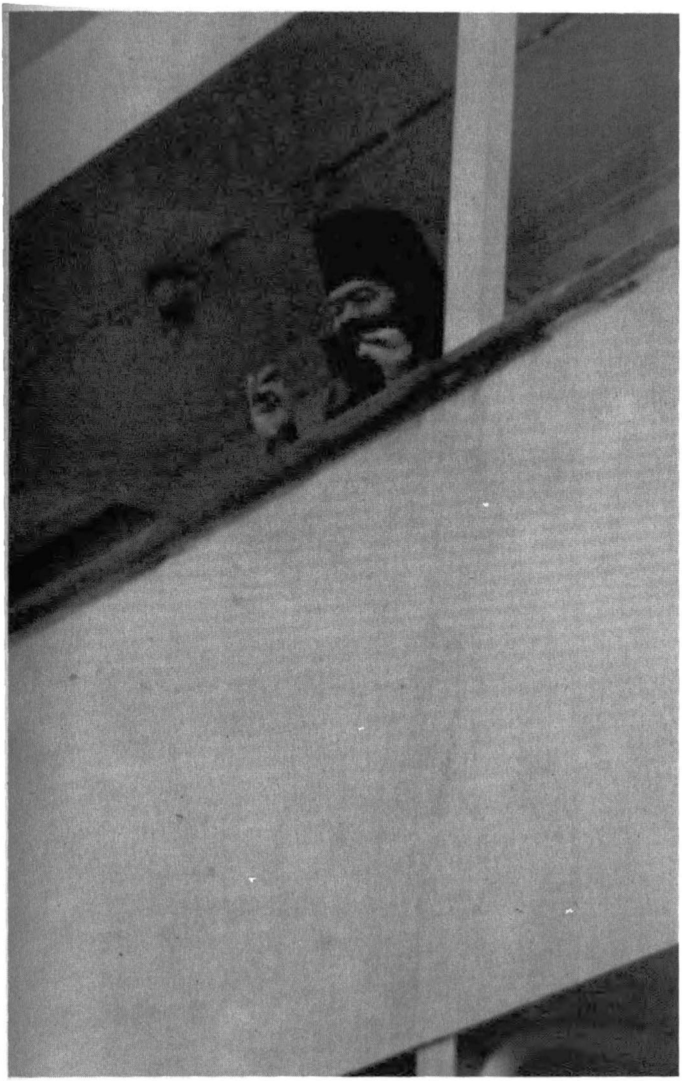
Bishop John with his alter boys in Shanghai, 1940's. Adults, left to right: Fr. Elias Ven, Fr. Kyril Zaitsev (later Archimandrite Constantine), Blessed John and Fr. Philaret Astrakhansky.



Bishop John serving with Fr. David Chevchenko, August 30, 1948, Sindao, China. When the Soviet administration ordered the church to be locked, Bishop John did not hesitate to serve Liturgy in front of the church. In this particular picture he is serving a molieben. The woman with the dark hair and white handbag is Anna Petrovna Lushnikova (see pg. 89-92)



Refugee camp in Tubabao, Philippines. In the background is the camp church.



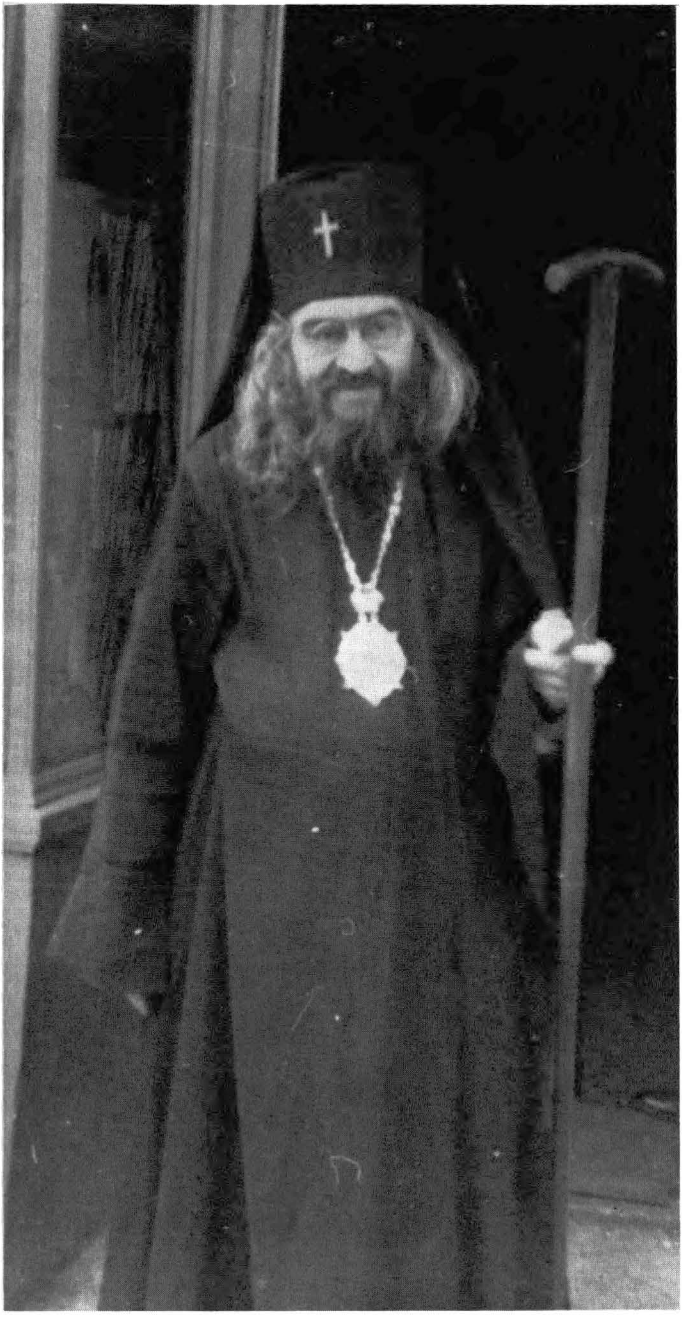
Visiting America for the first time, 1949.



Archbishop John's Paris "Cathedral," actually a garage church, in the 1950's. Before it stands Fr. Mitrophan, a disciple of Archbishop John (see pg. 241-246).



Leaving France for America.



Paris, 1950's.


Caracas, Venezuela, when visiting his parents there in the 1950's.

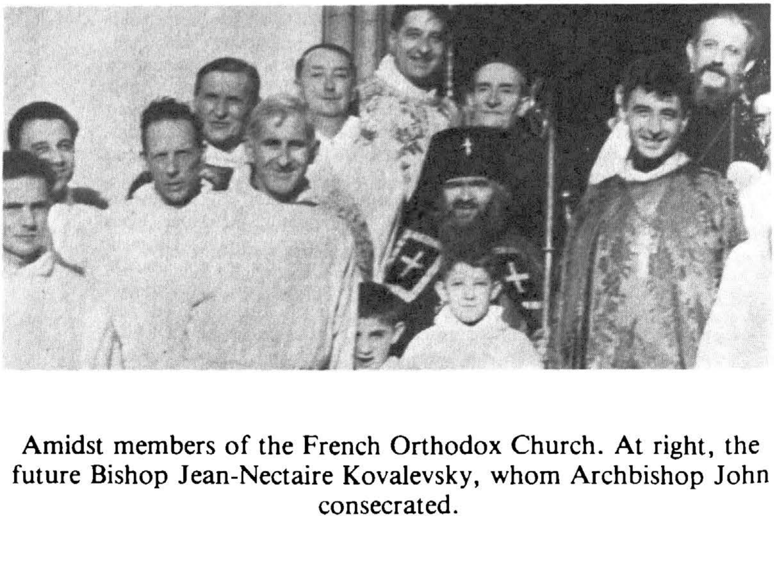

With Fr. Mitrophan in Tunis, Africa, 1952.



Serving in Tunis, 1952.



With clergy of the Orthodox Church of the Netherlands. Left to right: Hieromonk Jacob, Archbishop John, Hieromonk Adriaan (see pg. 155-169).



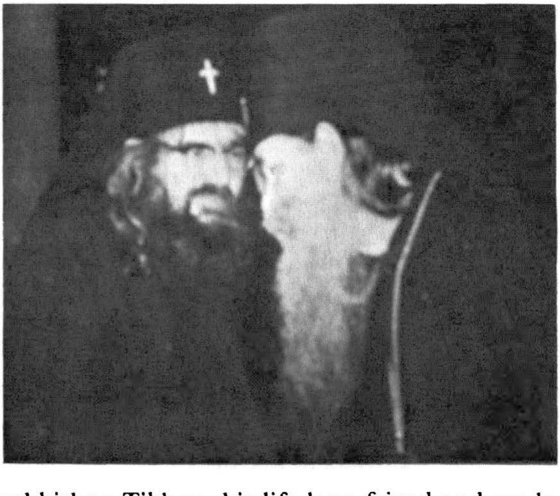
Amidst members of the French Orthodox Church. At right, the future Bishop Jean-Nectaire Kovalevsky, whom Archbishop John consecrated.



Europe in the 1950's.



Left to right: Hierarchs Petros, Nektary, John, Averky, Savva and Leonty.



With Archbishop Tikhon, his life-long friend and predecessor in the San Francisco cathedral.



With his acolytes in the new San Francisco Cathedral.



Archbishop John beside a picture of Archbishop Averky, with whom he had complete oneness of mind.



Visiting a church in Monterey, California, 1959.



Archbishop John (center) serving with Bishop Nektary (left) and Bishop Savva (right) in the Convent of the Vladimir Mother of God, San Francisco, 1960's.



With Fr. Nicholas Panamarioff in the mid-1960's.



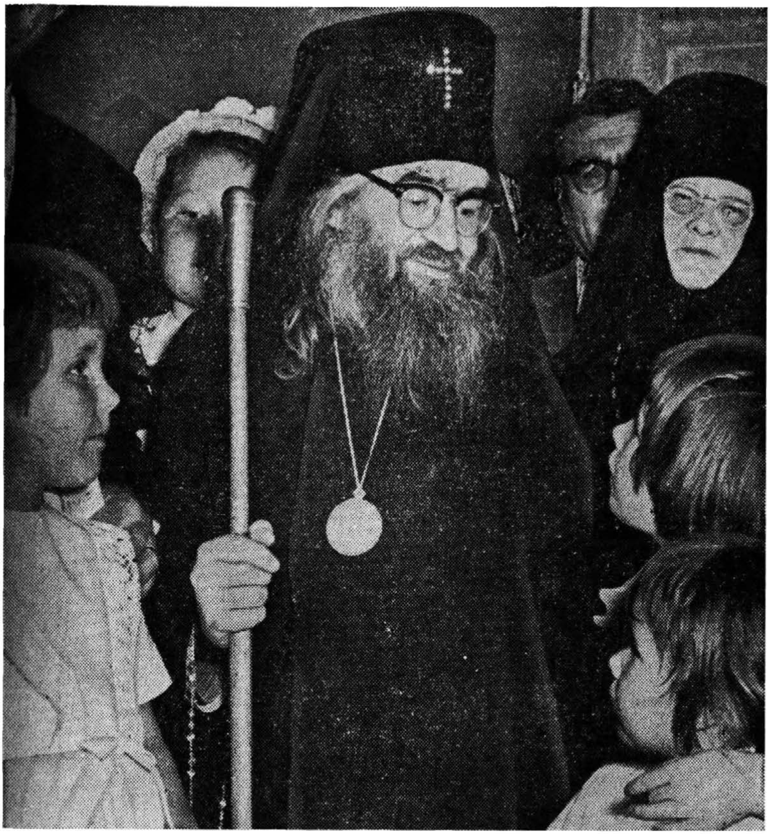
New Diveyevo Convent, Spring Valley, New York, 1965. Archbishop John on a visit to his spiritual daughters from Shanghai, who became the first nuns of New Diveyevo. He is seen here with Fr. Adrian, the convent's builder, and Fr. Adrian's successor, Fr. Alexander.



The elevation of the Crosses on the San Francisco Cathedral, 1965. Left to right: Bishop Savva, Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop John, Bishop Nektary.



With the bishops who defended him when he was put on trial in San Francisco. Left to right: Archbishop Leonty, Archbishop John, Bishop Savva and Bishop Nektary.



Archbishop John visiting the school at the Convent of the Vladimir Mother of God, 1963. At right, Abbess Ariadna.



With Bishop Savva at a Serbian Orthodox Church, Alhambra, California, 1964.



Photograph printed in the San Francisco Examiner, July 9, 1963. Archbishop John in court, surrounded by his friends. Left to right: Bishop Savva, Archbishop John, Archbishop Leonty, Bishop Nektary, Fr. Nicholas Dombrovsky and Fr. Leonid Upshinsky.



During the building of the San Francisco Cathedral.



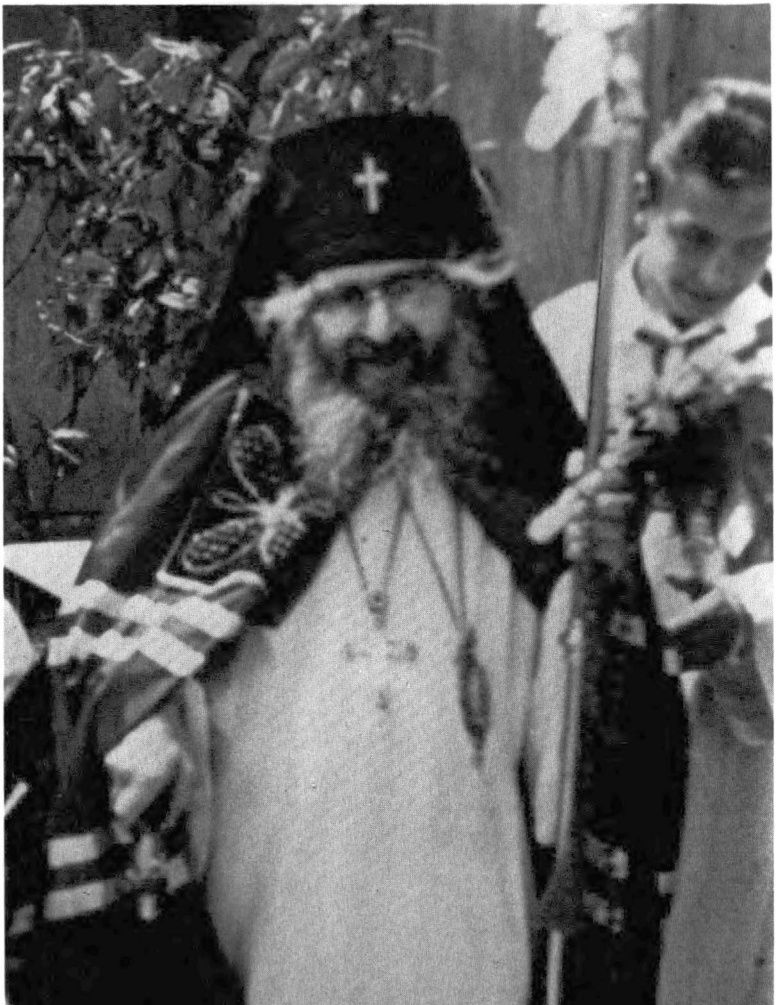
San Francisco, 1960's.



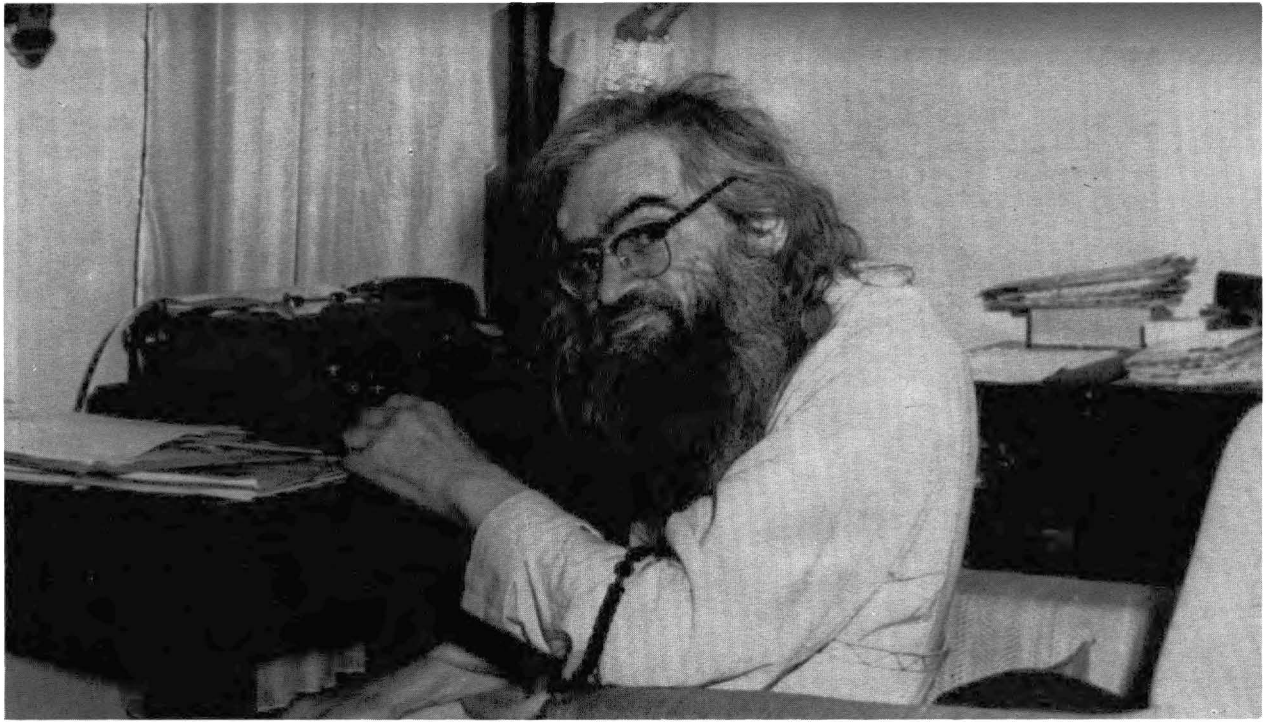
The San Francisco "Joy of All Who Sorrow" Cathedral.



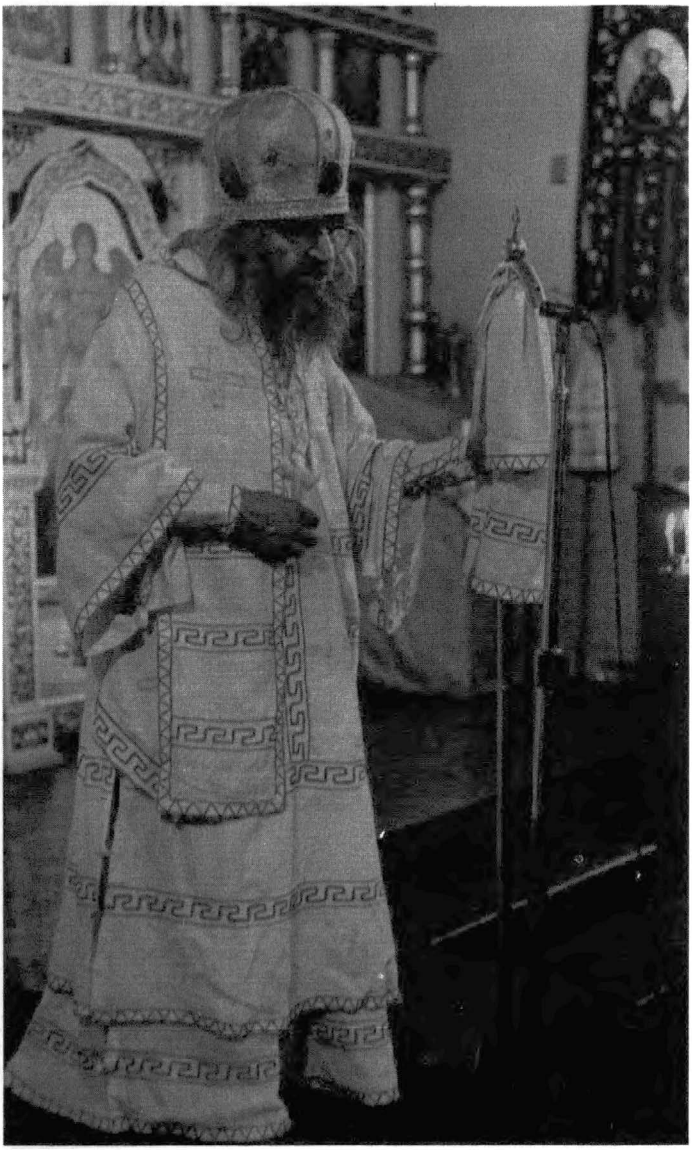
Archbishop John on a visit to Monterey, California, 1964, standing next to Gleb Podmoshensky (see pg. 247-249).



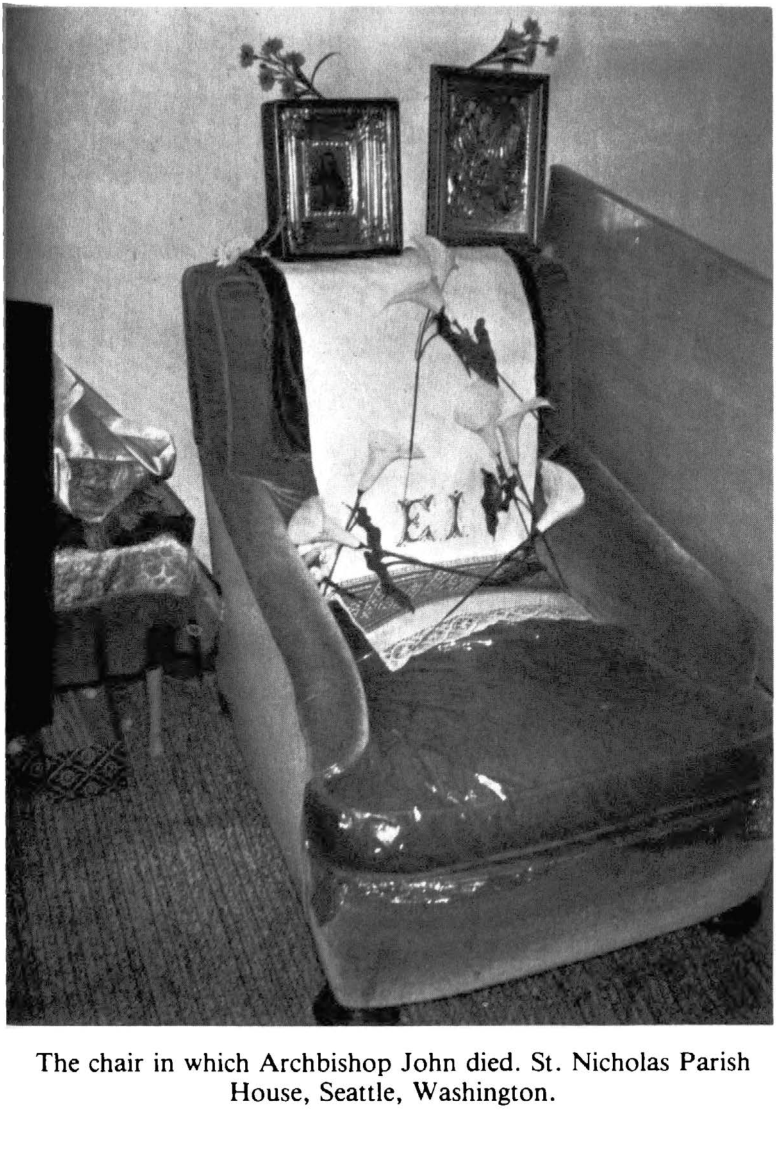
One of the last pictures of Blessed John, San Francisco, 1966.



In his office at St. Tikhon's Orphanage, San Francisco, 1966.



In the New York Cathedral, 1964.

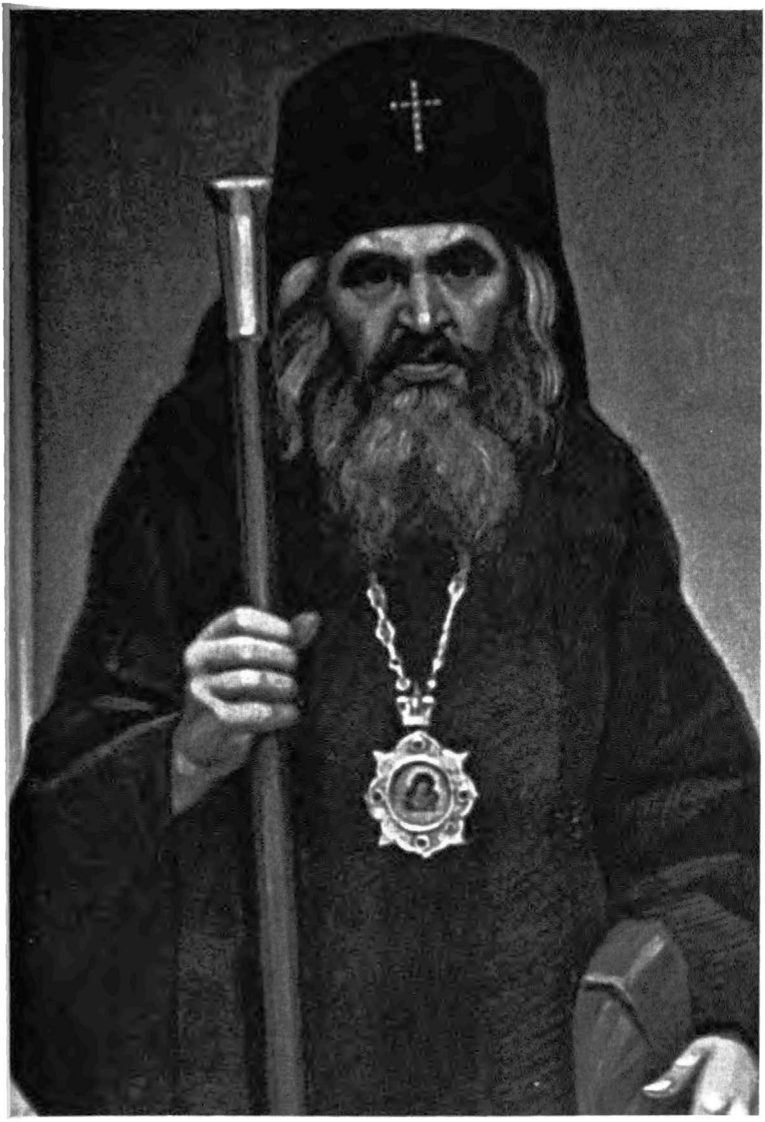


The chair in which Archbishop John died. St. Nicholas Parish House, Seattle, Washington.





The funeral of Archbishop John, San Francisco, 1966. Below, the procession with the coffin.



Painting by N. A. Papkov, now kept in Archbishop John's cell at St. Tikhon's House, San Francisco.



French icon of Blessed John.



The button made by venerators of Blessed John.
(See "The Miracle of the Button," pp. 403-405.)

Part III

A RECORD BOOK OF BLESSED JOHN'S INTERCESSIONS

Editor's Preface

In continuing the collection of materials which was begun for the Chronicle of the Veneration of Blessed John, *the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood has received a number of communications from people of various nationalities, many of whom never knew Blessed John personally. Their accounts reveal the ever-increasing veneration of this great wonderworker of our times, and also testify to his powerful intercession for those in need. One of the most touching and impressive aspects of Blessed John is, quite simply, his continued presence among us. It is quite obvious, as one hierarch stated on the very day of Blessed John's funeral, that he is not dead, but alive, and in many ways he reveals himself to those who believe in his sanctity.*

Many of the following testimonies recount stunning miracles which Blessed John performed both during his life and after his repose; others record relatively "small" indications that believing people are calling upon him as a living saint—and that he is answering them, visiting them, appearing to them and inspiring them in the humble and sober path of true Orthodoxy. Taken together, these testimonies form a vivid and compelling picture of Orthodox sanctity. It is a picture viewed from all sides, through the eyes of people of diverse backgrounds who in simplicity of heart cannot

conceal their love and gratitude to Blessed John. The editors have developed a close contact with the witnesses and thus take full responsibility for the truthfulness of their testimonies.

The first seven testimonies were collected by the St. Herman Brotherhood within a few years after Blessed John's repose, and record miracles which occurred in connection with his Sepulchre. The miracle recounted in testimony Number 8 happened to a family on its way home from the Sepulchre. Numbers 9-16 were taken from the last chapter of the Russian-language Chronicle *by Bishop Savva (St. Herman Brotherhood, 1976), which was published in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Blessed John's repose. In Numbers 17-100 are included other testimonies gathered by the Brotherhood over the years, many of which have appeared in the pages of* The Orthodox Word. *At the time of this writing, miralces steadily continue to be reported.*

Before the 20th anniversary of Blessed John's repose, the Brotherhood sent out the first 33 testimonies—as a Catalogue of Miracles *—to Orthodox hierarchs, clergy and laypeople in order to encourage his formal glorification by each local Orthodox Church. This* Catalogue *was distributed together with a* Report for Canonization, *which urged the faithful to send petitions for Blessed John's canonization to Orthodox bishops.*

The accounts which follow represent the "voice of the people," proclaiming the full significance of a contemporary "God-bearer" to a spiritually impoverished world. They bear

witness to the closeness of God, to the abundant grace that He sheds on poor human sufferers as a sign of how dear the righteous exploits of the saints are to Him—as in ancient times, so in our modern post-Christian era.

1. Deliverance from Blindness

A young registered nurse* living in San Francisco and working in one of the municipal hospitals, suddenly became blind in one eye. It became evident absolutely unexpectedly while at work when she had to give a patient a prescription—she looked at the label and saw nothing! Horror struck her! The doctors diagnosed that due to an inflamation of the optic nerve one of her eyes was already totally blind and had become dead and needed to be removed in order to save the other one. With this, of course, her medical career was abruptly to come to an end.

She had known Archbishop John while yet in her childhood in the Far East and somewhere in Europe as well, and knew from her parents who revered him about his miracles. But he was dead long ago. In absolute despair she rushed to his Sepulchre as to a last hope and prayed with tears for a long time on his grave. She began to come frequently to the cathedral, praying before all the holy objects and then would descend to

* Gali Vasilev



General view of Blessed John's Sepulchre

the Sepulchre and pray there for a long time on his coffin so that others began to take notice of her. At work, meanwhile, she tried to conceal her misfortune, not knowing what to do. Thus passed several days.

Then one night she was seized with total despair, and she devoted herself to flaming prayer, after which she opened at random the Holy Gospel and read the following: *As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.... When he*

had thus spoken he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with this clay. And said unto him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing (John 9:1-7).

"O Lord!" she exclaimed, having read to the end with awe this passage that "by chance" appeared before her, "if only I could get to the Holy Land and wash my eyes in the pool of Siloam, or at least get even a drop of this water—I will see anew!"

Early in the morning she went again to the Sepulchre of Blessed John and again prayed fervently there. Then a little, thin, old woman unknown to her approached, and said that she had recently visited the Holy Land and had brought some holy water from the pool of Siloam and that she will bring the next day a little bottle with water, since the Divine Liturgy will be celebrated in the Sepulchre and the Metropolitan himself will serve! From these words of "Grandma Elizabeth," who, of course, did not know anything about her prayer the night previous, the afflicted girl was amazed and early in the morning she was in the Sepulchre before dawn. During the Liturgy she received Holy Communion and kneeling over the coffin of Blessed John she applied the holy water to her ailing eyes. At once she felt better. The next day she already could see with the eye that was considered dead.

News about this miracle quckly began to be published and when it reached us, we met

her and asked her to visit the bookshop of Blessed Herman of Alaska and to tell us everything in detail. When on the appointed day she came and told us all the above, she then added that she had been confused since she prayed not only to Blessed John, but to a whole number of Saints whom she venerated, in the cathedral in front of their holy icons: Sts. Tikhon of Zadonsk, Nicholas, Seraphim, and others, begging them to help her. "And now even last night," she continued, "I was wavering about coming to you. At night I saw a dream, as if I was descending into some dark cellar with one window, while a lot of people are going there for some purpose and I also had to go there for something, and with effort managed to push myself in. Then I see it is Archbishop John's Sepulchre, but everything looks different, and there in the center is Blessed John in his mantle—alive! Others were placing sick people on him to be healed. Then I see they are placing an apparently dead woman on him and she slowly begins to move, becomes well and gets up by herself. Others are waiting for their turn. Whatever this might mean, I decided to come to you and tell you how everything was."

All this took place at a time when the enemies of Blessed John, though they became a little more quiet, nevertheless continued confusing people and thereby have considerably diminished faith in the Righteous One.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be

made blind (John 9:39).

September, 1968
Reader Eugene Rose
Blessed Herman of Alaska Brotherhood
San Francisco, California

2.
Deliverance from Certain Death

I give witness concerning the miraculous healing of my brother, Vadim Vasilievich Kozachenko, by the prayers of our dear Vladika John. This occurred after Vladika's death, when he was reposing in his Sepulchre; but he heard us and helped us as if alive.

One would like to talk a lot about Vladika. Many times while he was alive, in Shanghai and in Europe, Vladika miraculously healed the sick. In my own life the healing of Vadim is already the second miracle from Vladika. The first miracle was in 1952; I was in England, where my son Philip was born. From his birth Philip was very unhealthy, and on August 19th he became quite seriously ill. I wrote Vladika in Brussels. I received a letter from him and a leaf from a tree under which Jesus Christ had prayed; and I placed this letter under the child's pillow. He began to get better. It was notable that he became better on the very day when Vladika received my letter.

With Vadim this all occurred very unexpectedly. On Wednesday, March 15th, 1967, my brother's wife Nadia phoned me and said that my brother was dying. According to her

words, "The doctor said Vadim would not live until the following Monday. Prepare Mother, and come to say farewell and bury him." We did not know that he had been so seriously ill, because two weeks before this I had spoken with him on the telephone and he had assured me that he was completely well.

On the next day we went to San Francisco. When we saw Vadim we were horrified. His face was the color of tobacco, the whites of his eyes were bright yellow; he was thin, with a swollen stomach and swollen feet. Whether he recognized us or not I don't know; I remember that everything was indifferent to him. It was difficult to believe that the doctor had sent such a dying person home. I personally called his doctor, but I could not find out anything except that if he should live until Monday he would make some kind of examination and tests. But he was very dubious that this would be necessary.

We had only one hope: the Lord and the prayers of our holy Vladika. On the same evening we phoned Father Constantine Zanevsky and asked him to come on Friday and give Communion to Vadim. Nadia and I went to church and to the Sepulchre of Vladika John. After the first prayer at the tomb of Vladika the hope was aroused that Vladika would help us. Nadia felt this hope the same as I did. On Friday Vadim became worse. Father Constantine came and gave him Communion. He confessed consciously, but then again fell into unconsciousness. All our thoughts were in the prayer: "Dear Vladika, instruct and help us to do what is necessary

to help Vadim. Do not leave us, dear Vladika. By your holy prayers intercede for us and help us."

Suddenly the thought came to me to take Vadim to the Veteran's Hospital. It was as though some kind of power was pushing for this: Quickly, quickly, take him to Fort Miley. Again I phoned the doctor. He almost laughed that we wanted to do this. There was no hope. Why should we bother him and take him from one place to another? Despite these refusals by the doctor, we went to church, prayed, and decided to prepare the papers to take him to Fort Miley. Nadia and I were in a terrible state, but there was a firm faith and hope that Vladika would help. Later in the evening Vadim became quite bad: he was lying unconscious, his temperature had risen, and we thought that he had pneumonia. We gathered to take him to Fort Miley, but he, recovering consciousness, begged us to take him to a private hospital, Mount Zion, and not change his doctor. Nadia and I could not decide what to do; we both wanted to take him to the Veteran's Hospital at Fort Miley. We promised Vadim to leave him in the private hospital. Again we prayed to Vladika: "Help us, dear Vladika; instruct us and help us!"

Here Leonid Michaelovich Zubrilin came to the house and insisted on taking Vadim to the Veteran's Hospital. His advice and that of my husband Rostislav were like an answer to our prayers to Vladika. Despite all the arguments of the doctor, we called an ambulance and took Vadim, who was now totally uncon-

scious, to the Veteran's Hospital. There, towards evening, we found out that when Vadim had been taken to the Veteran's Hospital he already had four diseases: cirrhosis of the liver, an overflow of bile, internal bleeding, and pneumonia. The doctor told us that Vadim was very seriously ill, and that from the medical point of view there was no hope; but if we had faith, then we should pray, because only a miracle could save him.

Vadim became yet worse. He was brought into the critical ward. He opened his eyes rarely; sometimes he was aware and would joke, but most of all he would be delirious. On Sunday after the Liturgy we had a panikhida served in the Sepulchre. On this day we became acquainted with Father Mitrophan, who often served in the Sepulchre, and received a blessing from Bishop Nektary to give Unction to Vadim. News of Vadim's illness quickly spread not only in the city, but in other cities and states. Everyone was praying to our dear Vladika John. Father Mitrophan did not stop praying for Vadim. Nadia and I knew only two paths: from home to church, and from church to the hospital. But despite the fact that Vadim was very ill, our faith was growing stronger and stronger that Vladika John would save Vadim for us by his prayers. Only a short time before this Vadim had told me that when he was very ill he had often seen Vladika John and our reposed Father, sometimes in a dream and sometimes when awake. He was already dying and heard some kind of special singing and music, of which he spoke in his delirium.

After receiving Unction, Vadim became better and recognized his family. Father Mitrophan gave Communion to Vadim again in the hospital. A week went by. His heart became better; this might drag on and continue. The doctor advised me to return home to Redding. After we returned, three times more we were called, and each time, according to the words of the doctor, the end was at hand; he could not hold out long. The last time they had already prepared a shirt and suit for Vadim's burial, and they had already agreed what kind of coffin to buy and where to bury him. All this was done somehow mechanically. And then a strange thing happened.

We were standing in despair at the tomb of Vladika, and I was mentally speaking with Vladika: "Dear Vladika, if this is the holy will of the Lord, help us to bear this difficult loss. Help Nadia with her two small children, and my Mother. Do not leave us; help us." I had given myself entirely over to these thoughts and, as if in reply, Vladika said to me: "Are you doubting in God's mercy? Why do you not believe God? That's not the way I taught you." I was ashamed for my doubts, but also joyful because I felt that Vladika had heard our prayers. Next to me at this time stood Olga Nikolaevna Zubrilina. She was likewise praying for Vadim. I turned to her and already with joyful tears I told her what had gone on in my mind. She told me: "Valechka, our Vladika is a Saint. He has heard our prayers. Believe me, dear one, Vadim will get better." From this day on there

were no more doubts: Vadim would get better, although the doctors continued to assure us that there was no hope, and only a miracle would save him. Yes, we know; but we believe in miracles, and by a miracle of our Vladika, Vadim would become well.

After this Vadim became very ill twice more. Again he was placed in the ward for the critically ill. Nadia phoned me and said that the doctor was absolutely trying to persuade her to go straight to the morgue and begin preparations for the burial. But at this time she had such faith in his recovery that she advised us not to come, saying that she did not believe the doctor. I immediately phoned the Zubrilins and asked them to go to Father Mitrophan, so that he might give Communion to Vadim once more. When Father Mitrophan came to the hospital, the doctor said that they were expecting his death any minute. Glory be to God, by the prayers of Vladika John death passed by, and from that day Vadim began to get better.

Soon Pascha came, and it was a joyful one. Vadim was terribly thin; he was only skin and bones and had grown much older, but still he looked better. He was allowed then to eat everything. He began to speak sensibly, and then did he begin to understand what had happened to him. The physicians were astonished. How could such a sick man get better? After all, for a whole month he had lain unconscious, although there had been moments when he did recognize things. His wife had been called four times from work because death was near. Truly this was a mi-

racle. The physicians said: "We did what we could, but it was God who has given you life." He got better all the time. His liver was totally restored, and he was recovering quickly.

At the beginning of June, the day finally came when the physicians decided to let him go home. He was placed on a very strict diet. The doctors told his wife that he would never be able to work again. Despite the fact that he had gotten better, his stomach was still very swollen; there was much water, and therefore the danger had not passed away, and the illness might return, or he might get sick to death again. Nadia, I, and all the other members of the family did not worry very much over this because we believed that everything would be all right. Days, weeks, and months passed by and his stomach was still swollen and there were no signs that it would go down.

Returning home to Redding from one of my trips, I was very much suffering for Nadia, for I had noticed that she had begun to become discouraged. As always, my thoughts went to Vladika John. Before my return to Redding, I had gone to the cathedral to pray at Vladika's tomb. I so much wanted to see him, to hear his voice, to speak with him. At home on this very evening, my thoughts again returned to my sick brother. I remembered Shanghai and how in difficult moments I would run to the cathedral to Vladika to share with him my sorrows or my joy. "If you were with us, dear Vladika," I thought, "if you would place your hands on his sick bo-

dy, I believe that you would get rid of this swelling and this water, just as our Lord Jesus Christ banished the unclean spirits." And here—I say this honestly with my whole soul and heart—I do not know whether I fell asleep or was half awake: I saw Vladika John come into my bedroom dressed in a gray cassock with a black belt. He had his prayer rope in his hand, and on his head a small kamilavka. Entering the room, he turned to me and said, "Well, what kind of misfortune do you have now, that you are grieving so?" From my childhood Vladika always had a mocking tone with me, as a grownup would have with children. So it was now, but his eyes were full of love, and there was a smile on his lips. Here we were both near the bed on which the sleeping Vadim was lying. He went up to the bed and, not looking at me, he asked, "What's wrong here?" I told Vladika that Vadim had a swollen stomach and that there was much liquid in his stomach, and began to explain to him, saying: "If you would place your hands on Vadim, I know that you would deliver him from swelling and liquid and all the other filth he has in his organism."

Vladika bent down over Vadim, placed his hands on his shoulders, and began to pray; I felt that there was no need for me to say any more. Vladika prayed. I know that my eyes followed every one of his movements. Vadim lay on his back, his hands stretched out at his sides. Vladika with his hands encircled and moved down his body as if he were chasing out all the filth and impurity,

all the poison, not only from his stomach, but from his whole body. With each movement I felt that I was witnessing a miracle, that from this moment Vadim would begin to get well. Vladika finished, took his hands from the feet of Vadim, straightened himself out, and then vanished. I did not manage to say a word to express to him my gratitude; Vladika was no longer there. I wished to run after him, and at this moment I saw that I was in my own room in Redding. I got up from my bed and put out the light. I stood on my knees and prayed with tears of gratitude to the Lord God, and thanked our dear intercessor and man of prayer. In my soul was peace and tender feeling.

When I phoned Nadia, she informed me that they had noticed a change, that is, Vadim's stomach had become smaller. Gradually it began to go down. The physicians were very much encouraged and again repeated, "A miracle, a miracle!" With every day Vadim became stronger and better. The day finally came when he was allowed to eat everything he wanted, first a little at a time, then normally. He grew strong; his appetite was good. The swelling and liquid went away as if they had never been. They took Vadim off his medicines and allowed him to return to work. Nadia and Vadim had a panikhida served at Vladika's tomb, and likewise a moleben of thanksgiving. Then they went to the hospital to thank all the physicians who had treated him. All of them as one told him: "Don't thank us; someone 'up there' loves you very much." Yes, I know that our dear

Vladika loves and protects us, as always he has protected all of his spiritual children.

All of the people mentioned here are ready to affirm the truth of the description of this miracle by the prayers of Archbishop John.

Valentina V. Harvey
October 10, 1968
Redding, California

3.
Miraculous Preservation in Vietnam

He who at least once visited Archbishop John's Sepulchre could not but notice and venerate a rather large beautiful icon of the Entrance of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple which is placed at the head of the coffin of Blessed John on an analogion in the very center of the Sepulchre. This icon in recent times was miraculously renewed in one pious Orthodox family. It was donated for the Sepulchre of Blessed John in gratitude for his benefactions towards that family as well as for all who are burdened with sufferings. It's owner, Ludmilla Leonidovna Holtz, lives in the city of San Francisco and deeply venerates Blessed John still from the time she was in the Far East. Together with her mother she donated this holy object after a vow given to God: when Archbishop John died they wanted very much that he would be left under the cathedral. (They had heard that the Church authorities wanted to take him away.) And so they gave a vow "to give to Blessed

John for his Sepulchre" their treasure—this icon, which they did. Having married an American, they came to this country, where they had a son born to them, John. When he grew up he was drafted into the army. At that time the Vietnam war was raging. He also had a deep veneration for Blessed John, but when he went to Vietnam the blessed man was already not among the living. Not long before his departure, he came to the Sepulchre and placed a photograph of Blessed John under his mitre (which is kept right on the sarcophagus of the righteous one) with the intent of taking it back just before his departure for war as a blessing from the holy one. When he came back, he prayed at the coffin, took out the portrait, and placed it in the pocket of his uniform right over his heart as a protection against "the enemy's bullet." And with this he left for the front.

Here is what his mother witnesses, judging from his many letters from overseas, how our Lord, thanks to the prayers of Blessed John, preserved him from various dangers in a truly miraculous way. The bishop's portrait was constantly and without fail in the pocket near his heart, day and night, always. Being in the rank of corporal, John experienced a whole series of obvious miracles, when all around him would fall, dead or mortally wounded, and he alone would remain unharmed. Once their squad was ambushed, and he alone was neither killed nor wounded, while all others were either killed or taken captive. Another time a bomb hit their barracks, and those who stood right

next to him were seriously injured. Neither was he harmed when he fell into an enemy trap, although he had to wrestle with the Vietcong, and even received a minor wound. Having completed his assignment on the front line, and being transferred to another mission, he met his happy parents at a Hawaii airport. Only then did he fully realize how well he had been guarded and protected by the prayers and portrait of Blessed John.

In life nothing occurs by chance. The holy icon of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, by then donated to the Sepulchre, turned out to have a special significance there, which they had previously not known. This feast day was Archbishop John's favorite of all the celebrations of the Most Holy Mother of God; he was tonsured in Yugoslavia in a monastery dedicated to this holy day; on the same feast day he arrived at his first episcopal see in the Shanghai cathedral, dedicated to the Mother of God Icon, "Surety of Sinners"; and years later on this same feast day he arrived at his last episcopal see in the San Francisco cathedral, also of the Mother of God, the "Joy of All Who Sorrow."

Reader Gleb Podmoshensky
January, 1968
Gilroy, California

4.
Healing of Leg Ailments

In the city of Monterey, California, there lived for many years a respectable gentleman, a venerator of Archbishop John, by the name of George Alexandrovitch Skariatin, who worked for Archbishop John for many years. Thanks to Mr. Skariatin, the house of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk was acquired in San Francisco in which to house Archbishop John's Shanghai orphans. Also because of him, the Archbishop John Fund was founded, the mission of which was to raise money for the charitable needs of the Bishop; Mr. Skariatin labored for that fund for many years. During his last years, much of his strength was spent defending the righteous one, which very likely hastened his premature death. His widow, Olga Michailovna, continues his work, sacrificing herself for this cause up to today. For many years she suffered from varicose veins in her legs, until finally she was compelled to be hospitalized; however, there was no relief for her ailment. After six weeks, the knots in her veins grew worse, and the doctor insisted on immediate surgery of the veins, which took place on October 18, 1967. They made twenty incisions. She then stayed in the hospital for a whole week. They brought her home completely debilitated and in unbearable pain. In the evening, Fr. Archimandrite Mitrophan telephoned to find out about her condition, and then told her: "Everything will go away thanks to the pray-

ers of Archbishop John." The next day, early in the morning, she could not get up from bed to receive a special delivery letter from Fr. Mitrophan in which was enclosed a small piece of cotton saturated with oil from the lamp of Archbishop John's sepulchre. Apparently the letter had been written right after the Panikhida had been served in the Sepulchre at midnight. Here is the complete text of the letter:

October 12/25, 1967
12:00 at night

Dear Olga Michailovna,

I was very glad to have talked to you today on the telephone. I'm sending you holy oil from the lampada from the grave of Archbishop John. Open up the paper and every day anoint your leg (the sick spot) where there is no bandage. Cross yourself and say: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of our dear Vladika, heal me from sickness." I firmly believe that thanks to the prayerful intercession of our Vladika, the pain will instantly cease. May the mercy of God be with you.

Sincerely loving you in the Lord,
your diligent supplicator before God,
Fr. Mitrophan

Having read the letter, Olga Michailovna did exactly as Fr. Mitrophan said. The pain stopped almost at once, and next day she was already on her feet. From that moment, everything was in order. This instantaneous healing amazed her very much. Previously,

although she had heard much and had never doubted the miraculous help from the prayers of Archbishop John, she nevertheless had always been very cautious on that subject. Now, however, amazed at this case, she tells everyone about the power of prayerful intercession that comes from faith in Archbishop John. This is how Archbishop John expressed his gratitude to the widow of George Skariatin.

It is fitting here to draw an account of Fr. Archimandrite Mitrophan himself, who for many years lived in close contact with the righteous one. Moreover, Fr. Mitrophan's estimation of the ascetic life of Archbishop John, who undoubtedly led the life of a fool for Christ's sake, is very valuable, because Fr. Mitrophan, from his early childhood in the city of Voronezh in Russia, was in close contact with a genuine fool for Christ's sake, the great righteous Theoktista Michailovna, who died in 1936. Having become convinced through his personal experience of her clairvoyance, Fr. Mitrophan noticed a definite similarity between her and Archbishop John, about which he always testifies as undoubting truth. To others who have never had such a genuine experience in Holy Russia, this might seem an idle exaggeration. One must live with saints in order to judge about saints. Here is what Fr. Mitrophan wrote to us personally, having titled this note:

From the Life of Archbishop John

On the outskirts of Paris, in a large back-alley, there was huddled a parish

church of our Russian Church Abroad in honor of All Saints of Russia. This back-alley was actually a row of garages, or rather cubby holes for parking cars. In connection with the difficulties in finding a suitable place for a church in the city, it was decided for this purpose to rent to adjacent garages. There was no foundation, no ceiling, no windows and no ventilation. It was damp and cold there. The back-alley had no human inhabitants. Of course, there was no telephone near the church nor in that alley. All this created difficulties for church services. I was never renowned for strong health, and thus I would get so exhausted after serving there that for days I would be absolutely incapacitated and could not fulfill my ecclesiastical obligations. And so it happened that before one major winter feast day I was quite sick. I took all sorts of medicines for my heart, and nothing helped. In such a condition I remained for four days. There was such weakness that I had no strength to get out of bed, but I fully realized that one of the major twelve feast days was at hand. In Paris, our Russian Church Outside of Russia had only one church. The parishioners would come not only from all over Paris, but also from the area around the city. The eve of the feast approached, and I was immovable in bed. Besides this, I was absolutely helpless and alone in a two-story house. In just a few hours it would be time for me to take the train to church in order to begin the vigil, and I was deprived of even the possibility of sending someone to hang a notice on

the door of the church saying that I was sick and that there would be no church services. I fully realized that the poor parishioners would arrive from far away and would stand in the cold in bewilderment and sorrow, having to wait on this desolate day in front of closed church doors—to no avail. I was in terror. What must I do?—

Suddenly, like a ray of light chases away the darkness, so were my sorrowful thoughts chased away by the light-bearing thought that I had not done the most important thing, that I had not turned for help to Archbishop John. Archbishop John was at that time in America, in San Francisco, where he went to acquire funds for his former flock in order to build a church in Paris. As soon as I remembered about Archbishop John, I immediately felt an inflow of strength. I got out of bed, which I was not able to do earlier, I sat down at the table, and began to write a letter to the Archbishop:

"Dear Vladika and Father. I'm writing a letter to you not with the aim of burdening or saddening you. I have been sick almost the whole week, bed-ridden, but tomorrow is the feast, and in several hours I must go to church in order to serve vigil. I have absolutely no strength. I firmly believe that as soon as I have this letter written to you, I will be healthy."

The mailbox was downstairs on the wall of our house. I quickly got dressed, went downstairs from the second floor, put the letter into the mailbox, and, having forgotten about my sickness as if it had never existed,

I briskly went up to my room. I took everything necessary for the church services and, absolutely healthy, went to church.

The bishop heard, with his boundlessly loving paternal heart, the sorrowful plea of his spiritual son, and, as he had done many times before, hastened to help him, for he had heard across the 7,000 miles which divided us. Having penetrated the boundary of space and time, Archbishop John not only heard me, from wherever he was, but at that very moment he also procured God's mercy, and into me was poured strength and health, overcoming all laws of our earthly existence.

Archimandrite Mitrophan
(as told to Br. Gleb Podmoshensky)
December, 1968
Monterey, California

5.
Healing of a Dangerous Growth

I, Ivan Nikitich Lutsenko, feel obliged by my conscience to give testimony of how I was healed by the prayers of our beloved Vladika John.

For three or four years I had a growth on the joint of my next to the last finger, about the size of an apricot pit. For a long time I tried not to pay attention to it, although it bothered me a great deal. People sent me to the doctor to have it cut off. I went to the doctor. The doctor, Constantine Efimovich Zaharov, said that it would be dangerous to cut it off, since he might hit a nerve, and then I wouldn't be able to bend

the finger any more. But I wanted him to cut off the growth for me. People were already talking about it at work.

I have revered Vladika for a long time. About a year after Vladika's death, soon after the Sepulchre was opened and one could go there, I went there one day. I can't say that I went to him especially to ask his help, but just because he was so very dear to me. Coming to the Sepulchre, I kissed his mantle which is on the sarcophagus, placed a candle, kissed the mitre. I stayed there a while. I prayed at Vladika John's and then somehow forgot about it. In two days the finger began to itch. I saw that the growth had begun to soften, and in a week and a half it had entirely disappeared. And I had suffered with it for three or four years.

I absolutely believe that it was Vladika who helped. I had not gone to him in the Sepulchre for a long time, and then I went and see what happened!

Ivan Lutsenko
February, 1969
San Francisco, California

6.
Help in Finding a Spouse

I want to witness before the believing Orthodox Christians that Archbishop John, although he died, is nevertheless alive to all who pray to him with faith as if he were alive. During his lifetime I considered him to be a saint, and though I knew little, I believed in his prayers and used to ask for

his prayers in cases of extreme importance in my life. When he died I at once felt the need to pray *to* him, and often during church services in the cathedral would come downstairs into his sepulchre and read the Psalter to him as many used to do. Then many people used to show reverence and cared for him by reading the Psalter aloud, which is an ancient pious custom almost forgotten today—to read the Psalter for the dead. It used to be very touching to see some old lady with a candle in her hand, standing in awe before the analogion in front of a big old open book, carefully enunciating complicated long words in the Slavonic Psalter, at times totally incomprehensible to anybody. But at least they were understood by the holy one who heard them and was pleased that a living soul was laboring for him. Many people used to come there and quietly and humbly stand there, patiently waiting their turn to read, listening to the solemn words which mostly referred to the world beyond, from where the Blessed One was listening, than to us here below. (Soon after that the new ruling bishop by a ukaze put a stop to that, out of fear that people would use that as an excuse to leave the services where he was serving; now no one reads there any more.)

Once I came there and read for a long time until there was no one with me anymore. I looked around and saw that no one would be coming. I was all alone with the Blessed One! And then something deeply touched my heart and I began to weep. I fell on his mantle that covered his dear coffin. And then

suddenly I realized that since he is alive with the Lord and from there he hears us—let him help me in my various needs. And I earnestly began to pray to him for my sister, who wanted very much to get married, but because she had been sick for many years could not find a man close to her heart. Soon the service upstairs had ended and they came down to close the Sepulchre, and I left. That was Sunday night. The next day in the evening my sister told me that she had met a young man and felt that they liked each other. Soon after was their wedding, then a child, and now already for several years they have lived happily together. But the remarkable part of it is that their meeting took place exactly the very hour when I prayed to Blessed John about it.

Timothy Gorokhov
May, 1969
Salinas, California

7.
Mystical Protection at Death
or
The Archbishop's Nina

There are some people about whom one knows nothing at all, even though one might see them every day, and when they depart to the other world they are soon forgotten and their memory fades away. Such a one was Nina Khmeleva, or "the Archbishop's Nina," as many in Shanghai called her, since she was always in the cathedral and greatly revered Vladika John. Little is known of her.

She was completely alone, having no relatives or close ones at all; she had never gotten married, rented a furnished room in a poor part of town, and during her last years was very sick. One remembers that while still in China she went to all the services every day, never missing even one. This labor she continued also in San Francisco; at first she went to the old cathedral, and then to the new. One could often see her at the entrance to the cathedral with a receipt book, collecting money for the building of the new cathedral, and it is said that she collected some thousands of dollars in this way. On Thursdays, even when she became sick herself, she continued to take care of retarded children free of charge. In general, her path in life was a bleak one. She was considered a little simple-minded, a "blessed one" or something like that. A year before her death she began to lose weight quickly, then she said that she had cancer, and soon she was in the hospital.

The third anniversary of Archbishop John's death drew near, in 1969. A week before her death Nina said that "Vladika is coming for me"; but no one attached any significance to her words. She suffered much and swelled up terribly. But three days before her death she became better and said that some kind of elder was standing behind her in the corner of the room, all in white. Three times she saw him and asked him whether he had come for her; but he seemed to shake his head in denial.

Then came the morning of the day of the commemoration of Vladika John's death. In the Sepulchre under the cathedral there was already much movement, the Pontifical Divine Liturgy had begun. At this very time "the Archbishop's Nina" breathed her last in the hospital, and when her death was reported in the Sepulchre, the memorial service was celebrated right after the Liturgy not only for Archbishop John, but also for her. And so it turned out that the first memorial service for her was an "Archbishop's" service. Truly Vladika John took her to himself, and from that time on she has been commemorated in the Sepulchre together with Archbishop John every year on the anniversary of her death.

Reported by T. Blinova

8.
Protector of Travellers

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Archbishop John, in fulfillment of his missionary and archpastoral duties, travelled by airplane so often and over such long distances—the final time when his relics were flown from Seattle to San Francisco, where they were entombed—that he has been suggested as the logical candidate for patron saint of travellers by air. As the following account reveals, he may be considered also a protector of other travellers. This account was written by a Russian woman who was close to Vladika in Shanghai as well as later and has often asked and received his protec-

tion and help. Vladika John used to stop to visit her family whenever travelling by automobile between San Francisco and Seattle, and he baptized her husband and children.

On the day of Pascha we were returning home to Redding. We left San Francisco after being in church and greeting Archbishop Anthony and our beloved Vladika John. We were hurrying home so as to spend the holy day with my mother, who because of old age and illness could not go to church. The traffic was heavy and we did not feel like talking, apart from occasionally exchanging our impressions of the splendid service and the singing. My husband was driving the car. Our 7-year-old daughter was playing in the back seat, and I was sitting in front beside my husband. I had slept very little, since I had come from the Cathedral early in the morning. I decided to doze a little, and evidently I fell asleep.

And then I saw that the door seemed to open by my right arm, and Vladika John came out and impatiently called us toward him. The thought came to me—our time has come! At the same time a shadow passed in front of Vladika; it seemed to be the shadow of a priest. I sat up and said to myself: "May Thy holy will be done in everything, O Lord!" I opened my eyes and saw that from the left side—from my husband's side—a Volkswagen bus was hurtling toward us. I froze, and then I thought: have we died already, or not yet? For some reason I was reconciled to this and felt no panic; and,

shameful to admit, I did not even think to ask the Lord God to forgive my sins or think to ask His help. The bus flew by us so close that, as the saying goes, if there had been a pancake on one wheel there would have been a colossal catastrophe. When I looked at my husband I saw that he had turned very pale and his hands were shaking, and I knew that we were alive. I sat back again and thanked the Lord for the miraculous deliverance from catastrophe, and here my thoughts turned to the vision of Vladika.

What did it mean? Vladika had called us toward him as if with impatience, as if it were a matter of life or death. But it was I who had seen Vladika, and my husband was driving the car. I had said nothing to him, had not warned him—there had been no time. What did all this mean? At this time my husband saw that I wasn't sleeping and told me of our narrow escape. I told him that I knew, that I hadn't been sleeping. "Vladika John woke me up; he warned me." And I told him what I had seen. My husband replied, "But why didn't Vladika warn me, why didn't I see him, and why didn't you tell me anything?" I reflected. True, I had said nothing to him. But how could Vladika have appeared to my husband—after all, he was driving the car. Besides, I believe that Vladika knows my husband better than anyone else, since he baptized him. I believe that Vladika inspired him to turn toward the right side before the oncoming bus began to come toward us. I had seen the oncoming bus and at that moment our car was already at the extreme right

side of the road. There was no sudden movement to the right, and our car was going straight ahead, whereas if one would try to turn in an emergency to avoid a collision, the rear of the car might be closer to the oncoming car.

Vladika had warned us both! I looked at my husband and said: "How do you know that you were not warned?" He didn't argue with me. I think he also believes that Vladika had helped us on that marvellous day of Pascha!

Valentina Harvey
Pascha, 1972
Redding, California

9.
Deliverance from Cancer

About Vladika John I know only what I have read in your magazine. Last year, after the 20th of October, my mother was in the hospital with a severe pain in the stomach. I was very upset, fearing that she might have cancer; and then, in the night before the doctor was to tell me the results of the tests, I saw a dream. Many people were standing around a large white church with Russian domes. An old man in white came out of the church with a staff and came across the street straight up to my mother and me. When he came up to us I recognized from his photograph that it was Vladika John. He blessed mother and me, and I immediately woke up. I was not upset any more about mother. As it turned out, she had an ulcer

which quickly healed. Now I think often about Vladika."

Tamara Hirt
July 25, 1975
Sarnia, Ontario, Canada

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In the articles which Bishop Savva published in Orthodox Russia *concerning Archbishop John, there are a number of dreams similar to this one, and Bishop Savva makes a significant observation after describing one: "One may consider this dream as true, because St. Barsanuphius the Great writes that if one sees the cross in a dream, this is a sign that the dream is from God, since satan cannot represent the cross. Of course, other dreams also may be from God, but we do not have such a sure indication that such a dream is from God as we do if we see the sign of the cross in it. And if the dream is from God, one must be careful, says St. Barsanuphius, not to interpret it incorrectly, for here satan can deceive us"* (Orthodox Russia, *1967, no. 3). That Vladika John should make the sign of the cross (while blessing) in this dream, and with it give peace of mind, indicates that this dream also was from God, and was Vladika's grace-given visitation to one who venerates him.*

10.
Preservation from a Car Accident

The portraits of Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch arrived just at the time

when we were leaving for Europe. Being somewhat suspicious of how safe our airplanes, buses, cars and trains are and trusting in the help of well-travelled Blessed John Maximovitch, we were very thankful that we could take his portrait with us on all our journeys. Actually, our friend M. tells us that he was saved from a car accident by a miracle worked by Blessed Archbishop John. M. had been driving in his car at nighttime at considerable speed when an enormous deer appeared at the side of the road and started dashing towards his car. But before the beast could reach the automobile it was suddenly stopped, and at the same time M. felt very distinctly the presence of Blessed John Maximovitch.

Michael Nedelsky
South Dakota
January 12/25, 1974

11.
Hope for Departed Non-Orthodox

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following incident is from an American convert whose mother died without becoming Orthodox. He was in sorrow and uncertain how to pray for her when he received this answer from Vladika John, which he also interpreted as a sign "that we should be missionaries and show love and concern for the non-Orthodox around us."

"I was reading in the afternoon from *The Orthodox Word* of May-June, 1974. First

I looked at the photo of Vladika John's Sepulchre. As I did I read again the troparion for him and on finishing was moved to kiss his Sepulchre and said to him how sorry I was that I had not visited it more often in San Francisco when I had been there. I then glanced at a picture of my mother and asked him once again to pray for her, and I felt sure that he was praying for her. Then my eyes began to become heavy, and they closed and I entered into a kind of reverie, during which I saw my mother with her apron on, talking much as she did in the last years of her life. Then suddenly I sensed that Vladika was praying for her. I then saw her again, but this time down on her knees, crying and saying how sorry she was for her sins. She cried so loudly and so bitterly that I could almost hear her actual voice in the room. I was impressed to join Vladika in prayer and not to open my eyes. I began to pray simply but fervently for God to have mercy on her, and I was conscious of Vladika's presence very strongly, though I did not see him as I did my mother. She continued to cry with great sorrow and finally disappeared. Soon I saw Vladika John, but only from the back. I could not see his face, only the veil of his kamilavka and the side of his beard, then the top of his episcopal staff and the sleeve of his rasson. He began to slowly walk away, and I noticed clearly that he wore a plain black monk's mantle rather than an episcopal one. He then slowly exited with dignity and I never saw his face, but I was sure it was he. I then opened my eyes, arose, and again

recited his troparion aloud, facing East, and kissed the photo of his Sepulchre.

"I do not know the full meaning of what I experienced... One thing I note is that Vladika said nothing and made no promises. I was simply assured of his prayers and of the need of my own and others'. I also note that he wore a monk's mantle and staff, rather than episcopal mantle and staff. This would indicate to me that he did what he did in a private capacity rather than as a bishop in official capacity, which would mean that he affirms the Church's prohibition of offering public prayers for departed non-Orthodox, but also affirms the teaching that private prayers for them are of great value and should be encouraged."

Joseph McKean
Youngstown, Ohio
September 6, 1974

12.
Reminder to Pray for the Dead

"Here is something I have not yet related to you, but about the deeds of saints one must inform the whole world. Several years ago, when I was in great sorrow, the late Vladika John (Maximovitch) appeared to me in a dream. I saw in the middle of our church a coffin, and in it Vladika John lying in his mantle. Vladika crossed himself, got up, and said to me: 'Pray for the slave of God Basil (who had died several years before) and for ...' (someone whose name I could not make out, but later I figured out

that this was our roomer Eugene who had died)."

Alexander Pernitz
San Francisco, California
December 14, 1975

13.
Healing of an Ulcer

"My mother has an ulcer that cannot be operated on, and has had trouble for the past three years. In 1975 she was hospitalized three times. She would become violently ill at night, and the next day would be in the hospital. She would then lie in bed and take feeding by arm; in a few days she would come home.

"But in November of 1975 she was hit by another attack, and this time she had a fever of about 102 degrees or so (she is a small person and her normal temperature is 96). They said she could come home when the fever broke. My mother does not believe in God and His mercy, but this time she asked me to pray for her, and I said I would. She had lain in bed for seven days, and the doctors said they couldn't bring it down. So I received a piece of Vladika's mantle from a friend who knew the Blessed Archpastor. She told me to give my mother a piece of artos and holy water, and then to place a piece of mantle on her forehead and ask for Vladika to pray for us. I left her in the late afternoon and she then fell asleep, and the next day she was without the fever. In a day she was released and has been in

good health ever since. The faithful all rejoiced in the miracle."

Peter Herrin
Burlingame, California
February 2, 1976

14.
Help in Stopping Bleeding

"In the night into January 1, n.s., after praying to Blessed Vladika John Maximovitch and applying some oil from the lamp burning in his Sepulchre, on arising from sleep on January 1st I found that the bleeding which I had been experiencing for two days had stopped. Our Lord is glorified in His Saints!"

Marina Prokopchuk
New Jersey
January, 1976

15.
"Pray for the Sick"

"This past Monday evening I had a dream about Blessed Vladika John of San Francisco, which I shall never forget as long as I shall live. It was the sort of a dream that I wished would not end, and I awoke with such joy and happiness, and I felt so unworthy that he should come to me in a dream. Blessed Vladika had on his cassock and his panagia. He was bent over looking at me sort of sideways, his hair was black with streaks of grey hair, and he had taken off his glasses and said that he was happy for

my ordination as a Deacon, and also he said: "I am very happy also that you often pray for the sick during the services. Do not forget the sick, always pray for them, and visit them.'; and I said, 'Yes, Vladika, I will.' Then T., our parishioner, said to him, 'Would you please tell me about some of the lives of the Saints from Ireland?'—for it pleased T. that Vladika in his earlier days had brought to attention the pre-schism Saints of the West. So Vladika and T. began to talk. And that was the end of the dream. Never in my life has anything more joyous ever happened to me. Before the dream I had been unemployed for over nine weeks, but the day after the dream I was hired... It is so necessary to pray to these blessed people who have loved Christ and His Church so much, and at the same time to do the things that they have done while they were on the earth (but I believe that in spirit they are still here). How often have we read about how Blessed Vladika John used to go and visit the sick, care for them and pray for them very often."

Fr. Dimitry Serfes
Endicott, New York
January 9, 1976

16.
Call to Orthodoxy

"I have included here a note which I had written back in 1972:

'Today a friend of mine, F.C., a Roman Catholic, told me of a dream he had last

night. Yesterday I told him that when he goes to San Francisco next week he should stop at the Russian Synodal cathedral and get some oil from the lamp on John Maximovitch's grave for me. He told me his dream last night: when he went to the cathedral, he started taking oil from the lamp in huge quantities, and then he heard a voice saying, "Tell M. to come here himself and get the oil." F. also told me he started to make the sign of the Cross in the Orthodox fashion, but was told he held his fingers improperly. He corrected this and then woke up in bed, making the sign of the Cross correctly in the Orthodox manner. His roommate, a Buddhist, asked him what he was doing, and F. just looked at him and said, "praying." Just thought I'd write this down—who knows? Is John Maximovitch a saint?'

"Later I travelled to San Francisco and went directly to the tomb after Divine Liturgy. I prayed at Vladika John's relics asking his forgiveness for previous skepticism of his sanctity... It means a lot to me that Vladika John brought me into the Synod and to San Francisco in particular to be near his holy relics."

Michael Riggin
San Francisco, California
April 27, 1976

17.
Miracles in France

I have the pleasure of communicating to you two miracles which occurred through Archbishop John.

On January 6, 1958, at about 10 a.m., an Orthodox French man and woman, on their way to the Convent at Fourqueux where the Archbishop was going to officiate, were the victims of a very serious automobile accident, and they were taken, the man being unconscious, to the Hospital of St. Germain.

The man—myself—having been thrown from the automobile by a fortunate chance (the door having opened, while the dashboard had caved in on my seat), had both his knees broken, his ribs crushed, his head and stomach severely bruised. After ten days in the hospital there had been no movement of the bowels, and on the tenth morning he was as one abandoned; everything having been attempted to this end, the basin stood beside him unused.

In the meantime, a sister from Fourqueux whom the Archbishop had assigned to visit him, brought him a small blessed bread. Out of respect he began to eat this bread... with appetite. A half-hour later his intestines were liberated of their burden; the basin was near, so that everything could be taken care of properly.

The woman, Madame Pauline Richet, had several fractures in her right arm and leg. After being operated on, she lost much blood, was no longer able to urinate, and was in a comatose state. The second day, towards 1 p.m., Archbishop John paid her a visit. As soon as she saw him, she felt herself illuminated, with the impression that God was approaching her—of which she informed him. He took her hands and held them for a long

moment without saying anything. The next morning, on the third day, she urinated, spit out and blew out through the nose clots of blood. She understood that she had been saved. (These are the words of Madame Richet herself, who has just telephoned me. She likewise is happy to express her gratitude to Archbishop John.)

Archbishop John visited many sick people, but he always did so very humbly and discreetly. His good deeds in this regard remain unknown.

Some visitors, during a meeting with him when he was in Versailles, saw his head and shoulders surrounded by a blue halo.

Emile Moine
June 27, 1973
Paris, France

18.
Healing of Asthma

Among the thousands who knew and loved Archbishop John was the family of Boris Troyan, who had been very close to him since the 1930's in Shanghai. This family lived in the refugee camp in the Philippines before eventually coming to the U.S. The oldest boy of this family had been known by Vladika since the boy was born. Circumstances caused the family to be separated from Vladika for a number of years. The eleven-year-old boy became afflicted with violent attacks of asthma about 1952. He was put under the care of a physician, and standing arrangements were made so that the doctor

could be called immediately, day or night, when the boy, Vitaly T., suffered attacks of asthma. The family had been in San Francisco for about three years when Vladika John came to visit his former parishioners after a Synod meeting in New York City. When the family learned of his coming, they went immediately to St. Tikhon's Church to see him. As Vladika arrived and stepped out of the car, the people surged forward to greet their beloved Archbishop. He greeted everyone, many of whom he had not seen for several years. The family had not seen him for three years or more. He asked them what was new with them; they replied that everything was fine except for the boy's asthma. Vladika seemed startled to hear about it. He grabbed the boy by the hair, one of his well-known gestures toward the boys who served him in Church, and very abruptly said, "He has never had asthma and never will have asthma!" And looking at the boy, he said, "Isn't that right?" And the boy said, "Yes." From that time until the present, the boy has had no more asthma.

Reader Laurence Campbell
San Francisco, California
January, 1974

19.
The Closeness of Saints

My first meeting with Vladika John was evoked by great need—a serious illness. In 1953, in New York City, I underwent an unsuccessful operation on my left eye, which

had a cataract. For several months I was threatened by blindness. Finally I was again placed in the hospital and given so-called "shock" treatment, as a result of which I almost died. But after this "shock" I could open the eye. But here a new misfortune appeared: glaucoma... Again I was given an operation to remove the liquid which had accumulated inside the eye, and I was told that such an operation would have to be repeated every year.

It should be added that both in the beginning, when the inflammation started, and later with the increase of pressure inside the eye, this affliction was accompanied by intolerable pains which deprived me of sleep and the ability to work. And all this time our economic condition was extremely sad.

In such circumstances, hearing of the arrival from Europe of Archbishop John, we went to the Synodal church where he was serving. After the service, my husband led me up to Vladika. I briefly told him about my misfortune and asked his holy prayers. To my astonishment, Vladika, who did not know me in the least, when blessing me called me by name. After the blessing which I received from Vladika, I went to the hospital for the operation, completely at peace. And by God's mercy, by the prayers of the holy Vladika, this was the last operation I had: I have not needed them for over 17 years now.

After this we included Vladika John in the number of those clergymen and laymen for whose health we prayed when performing our daily rule of prayer.

However, after the passage of a certain time, in connection with the extreme exhaustion of my husband, we had to think of abbreviating our rule of prayer. The thought came to lessen the number of persons whom we commemorated, both living and dead. The enemy instilled in me the thought of saying to my husband: "Vladika John is a holy man and does not need our unworthy prayers."

In the evening we did not commemorate Vladika John, as also certain other persons whom we had commemorated previously.

After praying, I lay down to sleep. I had hardly succeeded in dozing off when suddenly, either in sleep or in actual fact I saw Vladika John (who at that time was in Europe), in his black mantle with a cross in his right hand. I went up to him with joy to receive his blessing, but he said to me: "No, you do not need me now, and I will not bless you. When you needed me, I blessed you, and if you will need me sometime in the future, then come to me for blessing." And with these words Vladika left without blessing me.

Of course I could no longer go to sleep, and all the time I thought of my unworthiness, the wondrous deeds of God and of the teaching of the Apostle Paul that we should pray for all instructors and for each other.

In the morning with fear I related to my husband concerning my dream or vision, and from that time we have not ceased, and will not cease to commemorate Vladika John, as before among the living, and now for his

repose, entreating the Lord that He, by the prayers of our holy Vladika, might save and have mercy upon us sinners.

Some time after this incident we heard that Vladika John had arrived and would serve at the Church of the Holy Archangel Michael in Brooklyn. I went there with my husband. I was afraid to go up to Vladika to receive his blessing. However, Vladika looked at me kindly and blessed me with joy.

O Holy Vladika, pray for us sinners before the Throne of the Almighty, that He might not leave us, but might strengthen us in faith and patience to bear our crosses to the end of our days, and to oppose with sobriety the corrupting spirit of apostasy which is so widely spread by the predecessors of Antichrist in our days.

Maria Mostiko
Forefeast of Transfiguration
August 5/18, 1973
Washington, D.C.

20.
Healing of Arthritis

I will tell you how Vladika John healed me. I suffer from heart trouble, high blood pressure, and arthritis. It was all tolerable until, two and a half years ago, arthritis took hold of my whole chest. The pain was unbearable. I couldn't move my arms or bend down, and I did my housework in torment. The whole time I prayed to the Mother of God and begged Her to deliver me from these torments.

And it was not long before help came to me, sinful and unworthy one. I saw a dream. I was walking on a road and carrying before me a cross; it was an old one and had become quite yellow, but here I saw that it was shining like new (it was the size of the palm of a hand). Then I saw coming up to me a monk with a staff in his hands. When he reached me he said to me: "Here you are all the time praying to the Mother of God to help you, but you are not the only one who suffers; be patient and wait."

Here I woke up and thought for a long time as to what this dream might mean. I decided that evidently this is pleasing to God and I should be patient. In a few days I received a letter from a friend whom I had written about my pains. She told me that I should write to the Batiushka who serves in the cathedral where the Sepulchre of Vladika John is located. I wrote him a letter and sent money, asking him to serve a panikhida for Vladika John and to pray for me. Batiushka fulfilled my request and sent me a little icon of the Mother of God, a little cross from Jerusalem, some cotton dipped in oil from the lamp that burns in the Sepulchre of Vladika John, and most important—his portrait. As soon as I saw it, I immediately recognized the monk whom I had seen in the dream—and I had never seen him while he was alive, you know. I burst into tears and began to thank the Lord for His mercy to me. I began to pray and to ask Vladika to pray for me. I confessed my sins to him, begging him to entreat the Lord to forgive me and grant me

remission of sins and healing of soul and body. With the cotton I anointed my chest and fervently prayed.

After this I became gradually better and better. The pain became weaker, my heart felt better, and my blood pressure began to fall. And so, after two and a half years of pain in my chest, it passed away entirely—and the whole time, because of my heart, I had been under a physician's care, and no matter what he gave me or advised, nothing helped. But by the prayers of Vladika John, the Lord healed me. I gave a promise to send money for candles or oil to his Sepulchre every year for the day of Vladika's repose, which I will do until the Lord calls me to Himself. My friend Olga Alexandrovna Makarova also was healed of arthritis, but that was during Vladika's lifetime. It was she who advised me to turn to him.

I have written you everything, as God is my witness! What good fortune that we have intercessors before God and His Most Pure Mother!

Sofia Zukulis
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
February 15, 1977

21.
Healing of Injured Fingers

One Saturday I went to visit an old American lady-friend, now reposed, who lived in an old-age home and could move around only in a wheel-chair. She was entirely alone and my visits always gave her great joy. I

always brought her sweets. The day was very hot, and I had to travel for about an hour. Having sat with her, I began to get ready to go home, again in the intense heat. But I managed to ask a woman who was visiting her mother to take me, even though it wasn't at all on her way.

She drove me to my apartment, and so as not to detain her I quickly got out of the automobile, and in my haste I closed the door on three fingers of my right hand. The pain was very intense and the woman became frightened, but I immediately ran into the house. There was blood, extreme pain, and immediately the joints of the three fingers swelled up immensely and turned blue. I thought that the fingers were broken, since I couldn't bend them.

I should tell you that I work as a pianist in a ballet school and play many hours every day. I thought that I would be unable to work for a long time or might even lose my job, and I was terrified. And so, with tears I turned for help to Vladika John with these words: "You see, Vladika, what happened to my hand. During your lifetime you loved to visit the sick. I also love to visit the sick very much, and now I can lose my job." In tears I fell asleep, after placing the ailing hand on his portrait. I woke up in the morning—and I couldn't recognize my own hand. The swelling had gone down, the color was normal, and there was only a barely noticeable pain when I bent the fingers. The whole day Sunday I thanked Vladika and asked for complete healing. On Monday no

trace at all remained, and I played without hindrance for many hours. From that time I thank Vladika every day and pray for the repose of his soul. I would like to live to see his canonization.

Nina Pashchenko
Birmingham, Alabama
May 27, 1977

22.
Deliverance from a Skin Growth

Christ Is Risen! Indeed He Is Risen!

Dear Fathers,

With prayers of thanksgiving to the Risen Christ, He Who works miracles through His Saints, I write to you this account:

For several years I have had a skin growth on the side of my neck. It started out as a pinpoint bump and had increased in size and length until it was about 1/8 inch in diameter and 3/8 inch long. A year and a half ago I was forced to remove my cross and neck chain because the chain would cut into this growth, make it bleed and cause me much pain. I put my cross and chain away in a dresser drawer. It bothered me not to have Christ's cross around my neck, and at times I thought about having the growth surgically removed. But I was confronting other trials and tribulations and this just seemed a part of it all. Instead, through prayer and fasting, I tried to better my inner self rather than my external shell.

While ordering icon prints from a bookstore in California, I also saw something

about "free" oil from the Sepulchre of Archbishop John Maximovitch. So out of curiosity I ordered some of this oil. At that time I had no idea who this man was or what he did, or anything at all about him. My order was delayed for some time (this being the will of God). However, during this time I started to hear things about this Archbishop John—his pious life, his works, his deeds, his healings and about this oil and how it should be used. A genuine feeling of respect began to grow in my heart for this man.

By this time, with all my love I was asking for the Archbishop's prayers, and was also praying for his blessed repose. In prayer I told the Archbishop that beginning with the first day of Lent I would anoint my neck growth with his oil, and I asked that he beseech the Lord to remove it from me. So for the few days that remained before Lent I prayed:

Please remember me, Archbishop John, *you know* how much I want to wear my cross again. Pray for me, God-pleaser. Blessed wonderworker, take away this growth that keeps me from wearing the Life-giving Cross of our Saviour.

On Monday night, March 13, 1978, after I had said my evening prayers in my icon corner, I took the oil from the shelf, put some on my finger, and for the first time I anointed my neck in the area of the growth. I didn't feel it! How strange, I instantly thought, that I should miss the spot. But how could I miss it? It's been with me for so long. I stepped away from the

corner to a wall mirror to check, but the vigil light was insufficient to see by. My heart was beating fast. I rushed to the bathroom, put on the light and checked my neck. *The growth was gone!* There was no blood, no scab, no pain. With tears I went back to my icon corner and thanked Archbishop John Maximovitch.

Soon after I had a Panikhida said for Blessed John's repose. For this service I put my cross back on for the first time in well over a year. Now each time I touch this cross I thank Blessed John, and I will pray for him always.

For your information I am 33 years old, married and the father of two children.

As God is my witness, what I have written here is the truth.

Peter A. Terasowich
831 Milford Pt. Road
Milford, Connecticut 06460

23.
Help for the Paralyzed

Dear Fathers,

Having read the "Chronicle of the Veneration of Archbishop John of Shanghai," I cannot be silent. My father, Herbert Klingart, on November 2, 1977, suffered a bad stroke and was paralyzed without consciousness for five days. In December there was a consultation of twelve physicians. They stated and signed that he would not be able to speak or to walk, and said, "Be prepared for the worst."

I flew to San Francisco and prayed at the tomb of Archbishop John. Thanks to Boris Troyan I received a prosphora, and his wife gave me a chocolate Christmas tree ornament from the Sepulchre, and they placed a little piece of paper with my father's name on it under the mitre of Archbishop John.* Soon he was able to get up, and every day he became better. At Christmas he was brought home from the hospital for a visit, and in January he was already playing chess, and could understand and speak. I took photos of him and showed them to the physicians. They said that they did not understand this and could not explain it, that this must be a miracle... Now he already walks by himself.

What a good fortune that Vladika John is with us, and through him our prayers reach up to the Lord God.

Nonna Katzenstein
2551 W. Campbell Ave.
La Habra, California 90631
March 28, 1978

24.
Diverting of a Hurricane

At the end of August, 1979, Hurricane "David" formed in the Atlantic Ocean. This hurricane had winds with a velocity in excess of 100 miles per hour, and caused great des-

*A tradition from old Russia, done when people entreat the prayers of a holy hierarch at his tomb.

truction and death in the Dominican Republic.

From the direction of the movement of this hurricane, it was evident that it was moving towards Miami, Florida. On Saturday, September 1, there was no longer any doubt of this. On Sunday, September 2, orders were given by the local authorities to evacuate the part of the population residing on the ocean shore, where there were multi-story hotels. On September 3, Monday, early in the morning the radios and newspapers announced that "the hurricane has spared" Miami and passed by.

The author of this present note was at that time in Miami and would like to clarify how all this happened.

On Sunday, September 2, after the Liturgy in the Orthodox Church of St. Vladimir in Miami, the priest served a panikhida for Archbishop John. When Russians had been staying on the island of Tubabao (in the Philippines thirty years ago), thanks to the ceaseless prayers of Vladika John the typhoons usual for this place did not occur. This was even noted by the local inhabitants, who often saw Vladika praying at night and signing the camp with the sign of the Cross. Once in the Philippines a powerful typhoon was heading in the direction of the camp. By the prayers of Vladika John, near the island the typhoon changed direction and did not hit the camp.

This same miracle occurred in Florida. After the panikhida for Vladika, Hurricane "David," approaching Miami, suddenly turned north and passed by. Thus, by the prayers

of Vladika John even after his death, the Lord spared the inhabitants of this city.

May the Lord give rest to the soul of His departed servant, Archbishop John, and by his prayers have mercy on us!

K.K.M.
Miami, Florida
September 3, 1979

(Translated from *Orthodox Russia*, 1979, no. 20, p. 16.)

25.
Help for a Sufferer of Rheumatism

Up to now I have not written about the diseases of myself and my relatives of which holy Vladika John healed us. I will do so now. I can affirm under oath the exactness and truth of my words.

In 1953 I began to be tormented by rheumatism. On October 9 (of that year) in Holy Trinity Monastery (Jordanville, N.Y.) there was the opening of the Sobor of Bishops, which Vladika John attended.

My sister Sophia went up to Vladika and asked him to pray for the sick Olga (myself) and Lydia. Lydia is our niece who lives in Australia. She had become ill and had been placed in a hospital. On the very first night (after this) my pains began to decrease, and in about three days I was completely well and did not have to begin taking the pills which had been prescribed for me by the doctor, and which I had bought for nine dollars.

Judging by the letters from Australia, Lydia also at this very same time became completely well, to the astonishment of the doctors.

In the winter of the following year, 1954, I again became ill with rheumatism of the joints and muscles, and on February 5 I entered the hospital. On this same day I sent a letter to Vladika and asked him to pray for me. To the letter, on a separate sheet, I added my confession, since I had read that St. John of Kronstadt, before praying for the healing of the sick, prayed for the remission of their sins. I enumerated all the sins I could remember. I repented also of my sin of smoking. I was especially tormented by the fact that I smoked when I was sewing vestments; I was sewing vestments for the first time in my life and therefore was very upset. I had never dared to ask Vladika to heal me of this vice; I had smoked for 27 years and could not give it up for anything.

Lying in the hospital and receiving no letter from Vladika, I thought that Vladika had not forgiven me my sins; and the pain did not cease. At this time I received a letter from Germany from a certain disabled veteran who wrote that Vladika had been in Italy, had stopped on his way through Germany, and then was returning to France. This calmed me and gave me hope that Vladika had not yet received my letter.

On March 7, Forgiveness Sunday, I was brought home from the hospital. I was still completely sick and weak. However, on Tuesday, March 9 (new style), I suddenly became much better, in fact so well that I even got

up from bed. I improved every day and could even do some housework. On Friday I received a letter from Vladika and felt myself completely well. At the same time I had obtained an aversion for smoking. Here is a copy of the letter of Vladika John:

"Finding of the Precious Head
of St. John the Forerunner
February 24 (March 9), 1954

"Suffering Olga:

May the Lord help you and heal you.

The Lord permits our sufferings in order that we might feel our weakness and strive more fervently towards the Source of every good thing, our Creator Who gives everyone what is profitable.

May the Lord strengthen you.

I have prayed for you and will pray at the Liturgy.

May the Lord also forgive you all your transgressions.

Go to confession and receive communion of the Holy Mysteries.

May the blessing of the Lord be with you and with your sister Sophia.

May God also help the sick Gaida.

Your
Archbishop John"

At the same time on February 5, when asking Vladika to pray for me, I had written also about my niece Gaida, a Latvian, asking him to pray for her also. She had tuberculosis. She was in a sanatorium, and the doctors had said that she should not have children.

By the prayers of Vladika she became well and has a son 18 years old and a daughter 14. They are both well.

Olga Makarova

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The above-mentioned Sophia is a physician by profession, and is a witness of these miraculous healings.

26.
The Healing Oil

Thank you ever so much for sending the healing oil from our dear Vladyka's Sepulchre. May God speed the day when our beloved Vladyka shall be glorified among the saints of God!

We wish to report that my mother used the oil on a small sore-scar she had on her face. The scar had not gone away with any other treatment. Within two days of using the oil, the scar was completely gone and the surrounding area almost completely healed! I myself am using the oil for a sore on my foot. After three days, the sore has now closed and appears to be healing also!

Yours in Christ,
Vladimir Raasch
St. Paul, Minnesota
April, 1981

27.
An Infection Abated

Having read with much interest and spiritual happiness, the book *Blessed John*, I

would like to add my personal testimonial of a miraculous occurrence of healing through the fervent prayers and intercession of Archbishop John.

In 1963 I was transferred by my employer from San Francisco to Portland, Oregon. And so, in March I moved to Oregon together with my wife, son, and two daughters.

While in San Francisco, our family became quite close to the Church and Vladika John. Our son Vova (Vladimir) was an acolyte at the cathedral; my wife wrote articles in the *Good Tidings* (a weekly, edited by Archbishop John); and I served on the Parish Council.

Soon after our arrival in Portland, my wife had major surgery which initially appeared successful. That night, however, while on IV, a serious infection developed, and her condition became critical. Although Vladika was on a trip to Europe at this time, I nevertheless sent him a telegram on my wife's behalf.

The next day two miraculous things occurred: 1) We received a telegram acknowledging that Archbishop John was praying for my wife Tatiana, and 2) the infection abated and her condition greatly improved—with subsequent complete recovery.

Alexei Kochneff-Kennedy
October, 1981

28. Deliverance from Meningitis

Dear Father,

Here is the translation of the miracles that Archbishop John has worked here. Excuse me, please, for the translation, but I will do my best.

My little niece, two years old, lay in bed with a high fever. The doctor came again and again, but nothing helped her. He made the decision that she must be hospitalized. The doctor specialist stated immediately that she had severe meningitis. The chance of recovery was very small, and if there was a recovery, she would suffer great damage.

It was Saturday evening. With great sorrow we went to the church for the All-night Vigil. During the office we prayed to Vladika John. We promised that if she was healed, we would burn a perpetual lamp before his icon. For the doctors it was a big surprise that on Sunday morning the little child was without fever, and she healed totally so that there was no damage at all. Since then, the perpetual lamp before Vladika John's icon is burning in the church of the convent.

A friend, who is a Roman priest, had heard of the holy life of our Archbishop John. He asked for a photograph of him. One day a nurse came to him who was addicted to morphine. She was married and had children. She asked the priest to help her. She

had tried everything to be delivered from the addiction, but it was all in vain. She had also made many pilgrimages, but without success. The priest gave her the photograph of Vladika John and told her that she must have faith.

The next morning, she took out all the morphine and the money that she had hidden, and she gave it all to her husband. She stopped definitely with it and she has no more need of it. (She told that in the night Archbishop John had come to her and that they had a little talk. "Those eyes," she said, "those eyes..."

Pray for us, holy fathers, as we remember you all in our prayers.

Hieromonk Thomas
Netherlands, 1983

29.
Relief from Eye and Stomach Pain

I thank you ever so much for sending my daughter and me the photo of Father Seraphim with your blessings written thereon, and all the other Orthodox publications, and, of course, the oil from the Sepulchre of St. John Maximovitch.

Father Herman, I want to tell you of some of the miraculous experiences I have had when I have called on St. John Maximovitch. I have a slightly enlarged heart and also suffered for years with high blood pressure, insomnia, headaches and considerable trouble with my eyes. Numerous times rainbow colored lights moved about in my vision,

making me sick. I had to lie down, but when I lay down, I felt worse because the bed and room appeared to me to turn upside down. The severe headaches would follow. My head felt as if it was going to burst. I even thought I could be dying. (Once, my blood pressure was so high that the doctor was amazed I was still alive, and told my brother so.) Then one day my daughter Garifallia and I received from you and Father Seraphim your gift of the book, "Blessed John." God knew how much we needed this book and moved you to send it to us. Both of us started praying to St. John Maximovitch and each and every time I called on him, I received help. I will tell you about two of those times.

One day when I was having those sickening symptoms with my eyes, I called Garifallia to get for me the oil from the Sepulchre of St. John Maximovitch. (We had the oil from Father Innocent of Tucson, Arizona, who sent it to us after we had read the book and had asked him whom we should write to to get some. He replied that a pilgrim, who had been to the cathedral, passed by Tucson and had given the oil to him.) With a prayer to God and to St. John Maximovitch, my daughter applied the oil on my eyeballs, and immediately I felt a coolness in my eyeballs (something I had never felt before), and the pains and multi-colored lights disappeared, and my headache stopped.

Another time I was suddenly stricken with very sharp pains in my stomach. The pains were so severe that I cried from them,

and this lasted for three hours. I prayed to St. John Maximovitch with all my heart for his help. I lay down in my bed and looked at the clock as I did so. I did not sleep, but just lay there with my eyes closed, wondering what was going to happen to me. Then I looked at the clock again and saw that twenty minutes had passed, and I could hardly believe the change that had come over me, for suddenly I felt a lightness in my body, all my pains had vanished, and I felt fine. With tears I thanked God and St. John Maximovitch. I lit a candle for him.

I want to share these experiences with you and others. Every morning when I say my prayers, including those to Our Most Holy Mother of God and to St. Nectarios, I add prayers to our beloved St. John Maximovitch. During the time of these prayers I have a picture of St. John Maximovitch before me. It is the picture of him in his liturgical vestments.

How marvellous are our Wonderful God's works!

I close with reverence,

Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Koumbo Pessimisi
2637-1 Dallas, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico
August 4/17, 1983

30.
Help for a Broken Hip

Thanks for another bottle of "Healing Oil from the Sepulchre of our God-Beloved

Vladika John." Truly his intercession is great before the throne of our Most High God.

My mother fell and broke her hip on the 12th of December of 1981. She is past 83 years old. After she came home, she said that she had little or no feeling in her left leg and foot. I put the healing oil on her leg and foot and prayed to Blessed John. She now says she can wiggle her toes, which she couldn't do before and she has more feeling in both feet and legs. I also used oil on my ears as I had trouble with them. Now no more trouble.

I hope that the day comes *very soon* when our Beloved John will be glorified.

Robert Hall
Montana
January, 1981

31. Help in Finding Things

Dear Reverend Fathers:

While living at the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, In February, 1982, I accompanied Hieromonk Seraphim of thrice-blessed memory to Redding, California, where he gave a lecture at the St. Herman of Alaska Winter Pilgrimage and celebrated the Divine Liturgy the following day on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord at the Surety-of-Sinners Mission Parish.

Shorly after Liturgy on the day of the Feast, Father Seraphim sent me together with several brothers to buy supplies and groceries for the monastery, entrusting me with

$150. Having brought a full shopping cart to the checkstand, I suddenly realized that I didn't have the money. I was shocked, felt terrible that I had lost the money, and proceeded to blame and reproach everyone and everything else vocally and mentally. We phoned the church and Father Seraphim told us to return. When we had parked in the driveway, I started walking towards the church and met Father Seraphim alone halfway, and he said, "You have it right there," pointing to my chest. "Archbishop John told me. You didn't think of praying to him, did you?" With self-assurance I felt my chest and with simultaneous joy and shame I found the money in a pocket which I thought I had certainly searched, and, startled, I replied that, indeed, I hadn't prayed to Vladika John. Father Seraphim then comforted me, explaining that after we had finished speaking on the phone, he had gone immediately to church on the left side of which there is a large portrait of Archbishop John together with his mitre and several other portraits and relics associated with his life and person and there he had asked Vladika John to help us find the money. Archbishop John informed him that I had the money right in my pocket—under my very nose! Thus, through the intercession of God's righteous ones, a sure trial and temptation was transformed into a revelation of the mystery of holiness and grace.

Riassaphore-Monk Gerasim Eliel
New Valaam Monastery
Spruce Island, Alaska
February, 1984

32.
Relief from a Spinal Deformation

As long as I can remember, I have had or been in some kind of physical pain or ache. Sometimes it is not so much; sometimes it is a lot. Last July, the pain became close to unbearable when my neck and back muscles went into "spasm" and my body became quite rigid and painful. Although I have always had back pain and stiffness, and a couple of times it had hurt very badly, this was the worst ever. I even went to a chiropractor who was "very concerned" about the condition of my body; his diagnosis was very bleak indeed. But I could not bring myself to begin thrice-weekly chiropractic visits—it seemed like giving in and giving up, and the cost was very high. I finally decided to let God heal me or deal with the pain as the repercussion of my sins, as it would be. At that time, despite my fears of being always in pain and maybe crippled or incapacitated someday, I still did not do as I knew I should—establish an earnest prayer life, make myself "tow the line," so to speak, and combat sloth. Physically, I was very sore and stiff and hurting. When I got up in the morning, I could hardly walk or move and only could hobble slowly on painful feet, legs, hips and back. I could neither stand nor kneel through the church services. I began to sleep more, which did help somewhat. This continued for quite some

time, and I began to spend more time in my room being quiet to avoid the pain and tiredness.

On November 16, 1985, a Saturday, I stood almost all day dipping candles, and I could hardly move because I was so tight and stiff and in so much pain. We were to have a special prayer service that night for St. Herman of Alaska and I wanted to go. After cleaning up from candlemaking I went to our room (my husband's and mine, but he was away) and lay on the floor for a few minutes, which usually helped the pain and stiffness, so I could go to prayers. I was still in a lot of pain and was stiff, but I decided to force myself to the chapel anyway. So I limped over; but after climbing the stairs, I just could not bring myself to climb the next flight and stay in the chapel for an hour or so. There were not many people there, which influenced my decision because I would not have been able to hide my discomfort with only a few people in the chapel. So I asked for forgiveness and thought that at least I could read about St. Herman in my room during the prayer service, and in that way would not be turning my back on him completely.

I could not find the book we have about St. Herman and figured there would be something about him in the early issues of *Orthodox America* that we have. So I took the first several years worth of copies to my room to read. There was not anything about St. Herman in the issues I had, but there was a great deal about Blessed John Maximovitch; and I read all about him with interest and in-

spiration. I was very touched through reading about him. When I was done reading and decided to retire for the evening, I found that I was still in a great deal of pain all over, but especially in my feet, legs, hips, back and shoulders; and I felt so frustrated and *desperate.* I did not know how much more or longer I could stand the pain and stiffness. I noticed a bottle of oil on the dresser where our cross and icons are—a bottle of oil from the lamp by Blessed John Maximovitch's tomb which my husband had been using to anoint a sick brother—and in my desperation and having just read about Blessed John, I figured I would give it a try. I cannot say it was a conscious act of faith; it was more of a plea. I put the oil on all of my body that hurt (except my feet, because I thought it would only rub off on the floor). At that point, I figured that Rev. S. might not like my using all the oil, but I did not care so much because of the pain. I prayed to Blessed John, hoping that he would help me and that I was not being disrespectful, for I knew my lack of faith. Then I went to sleep, "at the end of my rope," so to speak.

I awoke very early the next morning and was amazed and incredulous, to say the least, because there was *no pain*! I moved around—*still no pain*, no tension, no stiffness anywhere. All the way through me—way down inside—there was no pain, and I could hardly believe it. I had not felt that way in so long that I could not remember—I could have leapt for joy. It was a miracle to me that I could

feel so good and be so free from pain and in movement. I could stand and kneel through the services, and carry heavy things. On Thanksgiving Day, I stood almost all day, washed dishes after a meal prepared for 200 people and still I felt wonderful after it all. It was wonderful! —A miraculous healing for me.

I was afraid to tell anyone lest the healing and freedom from pain would go away and because it was a cherished and personal experience. (In retrospect, I think also because I had tried to hide from everyone that I was in so much pain—I had always taken pride in the fact that I worked hard despite the pain and covered it up.) But finally, I had to tell Rev. S.—partially out of joy and partially because I had used the oil without his permission. That is when he told me to write an account down and send it to *The Orthodox Word*.

In the couple of weeks that followed, sometimes I would feel stiff or a twinge of pain, but underneath it all was the strong assurance and faith and knowledge that, no matter the outside pain, the deep pain inside had been healed through John Maximovitch's help and prayers to God. I felt renewed in body, soul, mind and spirit. Praised be our Lord, and thanks to Blessed John!

Postscript: After I finished writing this, I remembered something else of note: a few days before a big celebration for which I was co-ordinator (December 7), I began to feel stiff and sore again, which made me again

fearful of the return of the constant pain. I am sure part of it was caused by the tension from planning this big event and having it "come down to the wire." When the stiffness began again, it was my feet which were affected first—where I had not put the oil! With the return of the stiffness and tension, I have been struggling with the fear, the pain and the other emotions: my shame at having doubted and turned my back on the gift given to me through Blessed John Maximovitch, my lack of faith, unbelief and doubtful mind which caused the gift to be taken back, etc. All of this came to the forefront again because of my writing the above account. After I wrote, I prayed again about it and after a while I realized I was walking without a limp and had no pain again! I also broke my silence of unbelief and told others about the miracle of healing which had taken place and will continue to. I thank God for the gifts He has given me.

Katherine Kersting
December 29, 1985
Portland, Oregon

33.
Healing of Neuralgia

I was praying fervently to Archbishop John about a certain question, asking him to show me what to do and to help us. I continued praying for about three minutes, and after the three minutes a terribly painful neuralgia which was in my neck, shoulders and back disappeared! This neuralgia had come

upon me unexpectedly last Thursday, six days ago.

+Metropolitan Pangratios
Greek Orthodox Diocese of Vasiloupolis
May 16/29, 1986
Woodside, New York

34. Miraculous Help After Reading the Service to Blessed John

Previously I was shown but did not possess the latest issue of *The Orthodox Word* [nos. 123-124] and the St. Herman Calendar for 1986, both with a color icon of Blessed John. Then finally, on the eve of January 23, I received *The Orthodox Word* in the mail, but not the Calendar. And look what happened:

I was of course very happy to receive the issue—such a beautiful icon of Blessed John. He looks as if he were alive; his eyes look straight at you. I prayed very hard to him after reading Zinaida's account of his miracles in Paris. Since the issue contained a whole Service to him and the next day was Sunday, I decided to read the Service then, after church. In reading the Service that Sunday, I had to sit down because my leg, which had ached painfully for over a year, still hurt very badly. This was the eve of my namesday. On Monday, the morning of my namesday, as I was sitting in an armchair, my leg was itching terribly, almost unbearably. I took off my sock and saw that my leg

was all covered with powder, similar to dandruff. Evidently I had rubbed so hard that it had become red. My entire stocking was full of this powder. I wondered what had happened, and why. This brought to my attention the fact that my leg had stopped hurting. There was *no* pain! And now, although I still limp, it no longer hurts. Yesterday I even walked all the way to the store in town and safely returned. I did so with a cane, but *without pain*! This is a miracle of Blessed John and I testify to it.

Nina A. Fokine
Calistoga, California
February 8, 1986

35.
The Closeness of Blessed John

I want to let you know of two small but far from insignificant events which happened to me last night.

I was alone in my room, feeling quite disordered and on edge. I felt greatly frustrated in my inability to focus on any single activity. I was particularly disturbed by the fact that I had been unable to complete any piece of writing I'd begun in over two years. Determined to change this, I sat down at my desk but still could not make a decision as to what theme I should choose. Next I felt a strong urge to pray and to ask God's help and direction. What does He want me to work on? So, I went to my icon corner and began to pray. I kept scanning the faces of the

Saints before me when suddenly the face of Blessed John seemed to glow and to come alive. All during this time, one of the children living in the apartment above me had been yelling and crying hysterically. I could hear her father trying to calm her down but to no avail. So I prayed to Blessed John to help and comfort her, recalling his particular concern and love for children. About fifteen seconds later there was total silence and calm, and not another peep all night.

Then I asked Blessed John to help me to write again (for it does so bring me peace and joy) and to help me know what I should write about.

So, just about a half hour ago, I received a call from someone in San Francisco asking me to write about a specific topic. It had been almost a year since I had heard from him at all.

Glory to God in His Saints!

M. Duff
April 2, 1986
Indianapolis, Indiana

36.
Protection of Three Orthodox Boys

Dear Fathers,

I keep reading about Blessed Vladika John and his miracles over and over, but until now I have failed to share with you three different miracles he worked for three different boys I know. It is my hope that, when these miracles are revealed, spiritual

children of Vladika John will hasten even faster towards his canonization.

I. *Adam Russell*

The first incident involved Adam Russell, my son of Irish, English, French and Russian descent, and took place on January 7th, 1970—Orthodox Christmas. I was a newly baptized Orthodox Christian, pregnant with my first child. I was twenty-three years old. Like many converts who never knew Vladika John, after reading his Life—the healings he worked while alive, the orphans he saved, the troubled people he helped, the Orthodox communities he started single-handedly among the French, Dutch, Chinese, Irish, Philippinos, Japanese, etc.—I developed an immense love and devotion towards him. So, when I prayed to God, His Mother and the Saints for direction, I always included Blessed John in my prayers.

Living across the street from the St. Nicholas church rectory in Seattle where Blessed John died, I felt honored to know a "modern saint" and privileged to participate in the panikhida for him every Thursday in the little room where he died. With reverence I kissed the chair in which he died, his kamilavka, episcopal robes and chotki. One of his spiritual children, George Kalfov, was usually there, singing with the old priest Father Andrew.

As a convert, I believed in the Orthodox Church but didn't understand the importance of the Old Calendar. So, while pregnant, knowing my child would be born around

Christmas, I prayed to God's Mother and St. John for my child to be born on the "True Christmas." December 25th came and went, and January 7th approached. I was getting excited but never dreamed I would experience the things that were ahead of me!

I could no longer walk up the rectory stairs because it was my last month before delivery, so I prayed even more fervently to Vladika. A few days before January 7th, I awoke to a strange phenomenon. (My husband Mechisedek was sleeping beside me.) My room was completely engulfed in beautiful, unusual white light. I thought I was awake and yet I felt so strange, as if I was in Paradise. A nun in white knelt before my bed, next to the baby basinette—I couldn't see her face because she was prostrating. And then I saw him—Vladika—all in his glowing white robes, standing in my doorway. I knew it was him because I thought of him. He was short; his face was brilliant, although he hid it by the hallway partition, and with his right hand he blessed me. This vision lasted only an instant. I believe that the nun in white was St. Elizabeth Feodorovna because I thought of her, too.

At 3 a.m. on January 7th, 1970, my labor pains started, and to my joy by 4 p.m. our son Adam was born. I glorified God, the Theotokos and of course Saints John and Elizabeth!

I will try to remain faithful to the Old Calendar, and to me it is *no* question!

II. *Timothy Lockhead, Reader*

Seventeen-year-old Timothy Lockhead, whose mother is Roumanian Orthodox and whose father is a Scottish convert, suddenly developed seizures for no apparent reason in 1984. He was unconscious and seizuring in a Canadian hospital. The doctors found a mass of malignant cells, a malformation of the brain from birth. They stated that Timothy should have died years ago and there was "no cure" for his disease. His sorrowing parents James and Eva went to their priests there—Frs. Varlaam, Lazarus and Moses—asking for prayers. Father Lazarus had a little bottle of Blessed John oil at the monastery, and they brought it with them to the hospital and began the moleben for the sick. And then—to the horror of all—the heart monitor indicated no pulse: Timothy had no heart beat! He was dying!

Quickly Father Lazarus opened the bottle of Blessed John oil and made the sign of the Cross on Timothy's head, begging Vladika's help with tears running down his cheeks.... And—miracle of miracles—Timothy's heart began to beat, the seizures stopped and he opened his eyes!

The doctors were astounded. Timothy went peacefully to sleep, awoke the next morning, sat up in bed and asked to go home. Precautionary measures were taken. He was kept in the hospital three more days. X-rays of his brain were taken: the malignant cells had disappeared! The only things re-

maining were a few small calcium deposits about which the doctors were not concerned.

Timothy finished a year of college this year, and continues to read in Church! Glory to God! And St. John!

III. *Anastassy Kortessis*

Anastassy Kortessis, an eight-year-old little Greek boy from the monastery parish of St. Tikhon, suddenly developed a faulty kidney. He turned yellow, and began dialysis three times a week, which is extremely painful for an adult, let alone a child. The doctors said he would soon die, as both kidneys seemed bad and his condition had grown worse.

His Greek parents were sorrowful and prayed to God, the Theotokos, and all the Saints for help.

One night while sleeping, Mrs. Kortessis had a dream. She was in a chapel she had never seen. A nun named "Mother Ioanna" approached her and told her that, if she wanted Anastassy healed, she should get oil from the Sepulchre of Archbishop John Maximovitch in San Francisco. "Who are you?" Mrs. Kortessis asked. "I am Mother Ioanna," the nun answered.

Mrs. Kortessis awoke. "Who is Archbishop John?" she asked her sleeping husband Stamatis. "I don't know," he said. "Let's ask our priests."

Fr. Lazarus was not at the monastery. Fr. Varlaam told the Kortessis couple about Blessed John Maximovitch. "I wish San Francisco wasn't so far—we can't go now!" cried

Mrs. Kortessis. Fr. Varlaam remembered he had a small bottle of Vladika's oil at the monastery.

They quickly went to the hospital, served the moleben and anointed Anastassy—especially in the kidney areas—with Vladika's oil.

The next day his condition improved, his temperature and voiding were normal, the pain stopped and he walked! The doctors were astounded.

Anastassy returned to school. He only has to go to the hospital once a month for a blood transfusion, but his kidneys function normally. Glory to God and St. John!

Thus ends the stories of the miracles of these three Orthodox boys whom God has favored through St. John.

Epilogue

Why do many people—including bishops, clergy, and laity—fail to recognize Vladika John as "Blessed," let alone as a Saint, and continue to hold back his glorification?

Are we so blind with our own cares and ambitions—this life, materialism and modernism—that, even though we call ourselves Orthodox Christians, say our prayers and keep the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church, we somehow fail to understand what Orthodoxy really is, what our goal in this life should be, and fail to use what little time we have wisely?

Why are we jealous of those who do good, as Cain was of Abel? And why are we jealous when those who do good become popu-

lar and we do not? Don't we realize that, if we also prayed, fasted, struggled, suffered and gave up things of this life, the Lord would work in us, too, as He did in Vladika?

Is sanctity only reserved for the Apostles all the Saints of Russia—but not for us? Can there be no *modern* Saints? God forbid! Jesus is *the same yesterday, today and forever* (Heb. 13:8).

Yes, brothers: mere men, even in the 20th century, can become angels, can be transfigured and work miracles through *prayer and fasting* (Matt. 17:21). —But what is a Saint? Does a Saint drive lavish automobiles and attend gatherings where he knows he will have a cushioned seat of honor; does he have constant popularity, money coming in, no sickness, worries or cares, constant youth and good looks? —False! Betrayal! Don't believe it! A Saint usually does not realize that he is one, for he is too busy worrying about the cares of others....

Poor Vladika suffered harassments while alive and suffers harassments now that he has left us. —Or has he left us? Miracles like Adam's, Timothy's and Anastassy's continue every day! As time goes on, so does the list!

Vladika's glorification continues to be postponed because the enemy of the human race works in men, is jealous, wants glory for himself and continues to infect others with pride, self-esteem and self-glorification.

We spiritual children of Vladika John—be we people that knew him, converts or people from different lands—feel his glorification

is coming. We know that God Himself will glorify our Holy Father John because man continues to be blind and to seek self-gratification. We pray for the glorification of St. John soon, and for the glorification of our suffering Church in Russia. We know that St. John and suffering were inseparable and that his last earthly prayers were for Russia.

Glory to God for all things—blessed be God in His angels and Saints!

Sinful Nun Nadezhda
April 2/15, 1986
Seattle, Washington

37.
A Miraculous Telephone Conversation*

I'm gladly sharing my personal reminiscences about the then still Bishop John (Maximovitch), remembering the following words of St. Nestor the Chronicler and praying his prayer:

"I implore you, my beloved brethren, do not condemn me for my crudeness if, being so filled with love for the Saint, I have decided to tell everything I know concerning him, for I feared that our Lord's words with regard to the *wicked and slothful slave* might be applied to me.... But first of all I turn to God with a prayer: 'My Lord Omnipotent, giver of grace, Father of our Lord Jesus

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* From *Ruskoye Vozrozhdenie*, 1985, no. 1, pp. 65-80.

Christ, help me. Illumine my heart, that I may understand Thy commandments and open my mouth for the proclaiming of Thy miracles and the glory of Thy God-pleaser.'"

I am also "filled with love for the Saint," but I fear my crudeness, my incapability in transmitting "the glory of this God-pleaser." And I don't know where to begin, how to relate in coherent order the huge multitude of deep, grace-filled impressions of this great Righteous One, which have been cut into my heart forever.

The bishop began his archpastoral service in Shanghai in 1934—the year of my birth—in this large international trade port of China. My family owned a house just three blocks away from the great cathedral dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God's icon "Surety of Sinners"; and my parents would walk with us, their children, to this cathedral on Sundays and Holy Days. My brother and I stayed in Shanghai from 1939 until our departure to Tubabao in January, 1949. We attended the Catholic "College de Sainte Jeanne d'Arc," which was located right next to the cathedral. I remember faintly the solemn occasion of Bishop John blessing the huge golden crosses and the raising of them upon the five domes on top of the beautiful completed cathedral. Next to the cathedral there was built a rectory which was several stories high and over the center of which was a bell tower. I recall that behind this rectory there was an empty lot for the unfinished second church; and it was here that Blessed John always celebrated the rite of the Great

Agiasmos, the blessing of water on Epiphany. During summers, when the school was closed, my brother and I would often go to play on that rather large church lot.

I was about eight or nine years old when one hot summer day, I went into the huge, always cool cathedral in order to rest from the heat. It was a weekday, about 7:00 in the evening, and outside it was still quite light. The evening service was in progress, performed by the priest on duty, and the cathedral was almost empty. At his place near the massive cathedral column, between the main altar and the right side-altar, before his analogion with church service books—stood Bishop John. Later I learned that Blessed John unfailingly attended all nine services [including Liturgy] in the daily cycle appointed by the Orthodox Church, and that he communicated every day. After the service I came up to him to receive a blessing. He asked me what my name was and invited me to visit him "to have a talk." I shall never forget that he, before leaving the temple, made many prostrations to the ground in front of every icon in the cathedral, as if bidding farewell for a time to his close friends—the Saints. I followed him, holding his staff in my hands. My young soul at once was drawn to this extraordinary man, subconsciously feeling that deeply Christian love which the good bishop *nurtured* in people, especially the children.

For the first time in my life I entered his large study on the second floor of the rectory. The entire right side of his office,

from the ceiling down to the level of the analogion in the corner, was filled with a multitude of icons of various sizes. For some reason I assumed it was quite natural that when entering his office, he would at once begin to make prostrations before the icons and again pray for a long time. Finally he sat at his desk, which was literally packed with papers, and had a long talk with me. Just like he was to do later on, he talked about the Church, about the Lives of the ascetics and Saints, about Martyrs, about Church Feasts. I did not want to go home, away from this unusual man.

It was already dark by the time Bishop John blessed me and ordered me to go home. After that I began daily—morning and evening—to attend the church services in the cathedral and to serve in the altar. After Liturgy on weekdays, he would consume the Holy Gifts himself, remaining in deep prayer in the altar long after the departure of the serving priest. And again, as always, he would venerate all the icons in the cathedral before leaving it for his living quarters.

While talking to me in his office, Blessed John would sometimes doze off for several seconds. I found out soon enough that he never would go to sleep in bed, but would only allow himself short snatches of sleep in a chair or on his knees before his beloved icons, where his secretary, a certain Mr. Kantov, would sometimes find him unawares.

I was witness to an incredible incident of his conscious sleep! One evening, during a talk with me in his study, the telephone

rang on his table and he answered it. I don't know with whom he talked, but I shall never forget how, continuing the conversation on the telephone, he dropped the telephone receiver and fell asleep. The receiver lay on his cassock—on his knees—and he, asleep, continued for the longest time to hear and talk to the person who had called him. According to the laws of physical nature it is absolutely not possible—neither for the bishop to hear the one who called him, nor for that man to hear what Blessed John was answering him. However, judging from the length and content of what the hierarch was saying, it was obvious to me that—in this miraculous manner—the conversation did indeed continue!

Once while I was in his office they brought him his dinner: I remember that it was a bowl of borsht and a cup of *kisel* [fruit pudding]. He was alone and I was in the adjacent room, where they also brought to me this modest meal. And through the open door I clearly saw how Blessed John poured the sweet kisel into the bowl of borsht and began to eat this untasty mixture. At that time such things seemed to me, yet a child, absolutely natural for the bishop to do.

All the children and altar boys loved the bishop, in spite of his strictness. (Once the bishop ordered the warden Michael to whip some guilty ones for their mischief.) Blessed John became my ideal and I decided to imitate him in everything. Once during Great Lent I stopped sleeping on my bed, and would lie down to sleep on the floor; I

ceased having dinners with my family as I normally would do, and would eat only bread and water, etc. My parents got upset and brought me to the good bishop. After hearing what they had to say, he ordered his warden to go to the store and bring back some bologna. To my tearful pleas that "after all it is Great Lent now," the wise archpastor ordered me to eat up the bologna that was brought and to always remember that obedience to parents is more important than self-imposed fasting. "How should I continue, then, Vladiko?" I asked, still wishing in some "special manner" to continue my podvig [ascetic exploit]. To this he answered: "Continue attending church as you do, but at home do what your Father and Mother tell you." I remember how I became resentful that he did not designate for me some "special" ascetic podvig.

I remember still another remarkable occurrence, or rather an incident in the life of Blessed John during which I was personally present. It was a usual weekday and the Liturgy was being celebrated by one of the Shanghai cathedral priests. Blessed John was standing on his usual spot, and I was apparently serving in the altar—I don't remember for sure. But I remember well how that priest during his sermon was scolding the bishop, pointing his finger at him and resorting to such words as these: "a snake, a scorpion, a toad, a hypocrite," etc. The bishop continued to stand in his place, showing no reaction to these irrational attacks of his priest, but proceeding to read from some book before him

on his analogion. Later my Father told me how he and many others were indignant at such unacceptable behavior on the part of the priest towards his bishop, and how they asked that the latter punish the scoundrel. The bishop, however, took no measures, stating that it was a personal matter. What holy lack of malice! And in general no one ever heard a single word of condemnation towards anybody coming from the lips of this Righteous One.

The late archpriest Seraphim Slobodsky told me how he once asked Blessed John a question: "Who is at fault in that sad Church quarrel that is raging in connection with the cathedral building in San Francisco?" And the Blessed One very simply answered with one word: "the devil."

"Care for the human soul" is the term that could best describe that essential impulse that motivated the whole life and activity of the greatest man of prayer and Righteous One—not only of our lukewarm century, but I firmly believe, in general of the whole history of the universal Christian Church. Otherwise, how can one explain all that I was a living witness of? I saw how, for example, his face would at times literally become transfigured during Liturgies on great Feast days, shining with unearthly light; and how his eyes, always full of divine love, clearly reflected unutterable joy—unattainable for us sinners—from the presence of the Holy Spirit. I beheld how on the Paschal night he would fly, as if carried by angels, around the whole of the newly built Shanghai cathedral, exclaim-

ing with a fulness of joy the victory-bearing words: "Christ is risen! Christ is risen!" There was no limit, it seemed, to his genuine exultation: his whole being was immersed in the joy of Christ, Whom he truly and entirely loved.

But what was most astonishing was his gift of seeing the human heart and attracting it to Christ. After all, if it were not for this Righteous One, I would have never thought of ever serving the Church in the priestly calling. And how amazing was his prediction of what was to happen to us! In his letter of October 23/November 7, 1949 to my brother and me—when we were only thirteen and fifteen years old, had just arrived in Australia from the Philippine Islands and were already rarely going to church—he forewarned us: "When we abandon God's ways, we can enjoy our bodies only for a time—then we will feel the bitterness of that evil, which appears sweet." Even today I cannot read these prophetic words without bitter tears of gratitude—thirty-five years later!

He knew that I would write to him on May 19/June 1, 1969: "Oh, how I wish I could talk to you personally, Vladiko! So much has happened and been impressed upon my mind since I was in the Philippines, that I do not recognize myself. The spiritual striving of my childhood have sunken into my sinful, materialistic surroundings."

But the great saint saw that not all of my spiritual strivings were "sunken," and he continued to call me to serve the Church, advising me "to receive a theological educa-

tion and for this purpose to enroll in Holy Trinity Seminary. May the Lord help you and may He bless you on that path" (letter of January 18/ 31, 1961).

Of course, I have no adequate words to express my gratitude to and love for the unforgettable archpastor. During the earthly life of a bishop we liturgically exclaim: "Through the holy prayers of our master, O lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us." But since "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32), according to the truthful words of our Saviour Himself, I even today continue to call for the help of Saint John with that same prayer.

Constantly thanking God for vouchsafing me to be a witness of His greatest saint, through whose prayers I have not sunken entirely into the vanity of this world, I have no doubt that the day will come when the earthly Church will also canonize Archbishop John as one of those "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38)—and we shall thank God, wondrous in His saints.

Fr. George Larin

38.
Removal of a Swelling

Vladika John was to us orphans like a loving father, a great friend who was very understanding. In the orphanage he would even have parties for us several times a year, for he knew that we children also had

to have some fun. He was a spiritual man, a man of holy life, and yet he also understood secular life. We could always come to him and ask his help when we were heavy-hearted, and he would always understand and lovingly console us. He would always joke with us so that we never felt sad.

He especially loved me because I was the first girl who came to live in his orphanage. He also used to visit me here occasionally, and he very much loved my children, who called him "Grandpa." My daughter Olga was baptized by him at St. Tikhon's orphanage house here in San Francisco. When he died I lost both a great friend and a father.

I had a husband who was both a ruffian and an atheist. He used to beat me. I complained to Vladika, who summoned him and asked, "Why do you beat Valya?"

To this my husband answered, "Because she works and does not give me the money."

"And where does she spend the money?" Vladika said. "She spends it on children. It is very good that she spends it on children and not on loose living. If you will hurt Valya I will take her back to St. Tikhon's orphanage. It will not be difficult for me to support her there. I brought up, with God's help, 3,500 orphans, so that will not be a problem."

My husband promised not to hurt me any more and was a good husband after that, while Vladika was alive; but when Vladika died he was bad again, and I divorced him.

The reason I describe all this to you is that a miracle occurred because of it. Evi-

dently, when my husband hit me on the chest, a lump developed that was the size of a fist. I went to see a doctor, Mrs. Shimkin, and showed it to her. She told me that a series of injections should dissolve it. After several injections the lump hardened. Then I went to Fr. Mitrophan and told him everything that had happened. He told me, "Let us go to dear Blessed John's Sepulchre and serve a panikhida to "Vladichenka," as you call him. We'll take some oil from his lamp and you anoint yourself three times, saying: 'Through the prayers of our holy Archbishop John, O God, give health to the slave of God Valentina, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen!'"

I did anoint myself on four occasions just as he said, and everything went away just as he said it would. Meanwhile, Dr. Shimkin had had a concilium of doctors to decide what to do about me, and she called me up. I told her that I did not have that swelling any more, but she did not believe me and told me to come to her so she could see for herself and be convinced. And when I came to her, she examined me and was amazed that I had no swelling at all. Then she asked whether she could come with me to visit that holy man's place. I told her, "Of course—I even have a key to his Sepulchre. We'll go and pray before him, and you'll light a candle for him." To this she said that she was Jewish. I told her that people of all faiths and denominations go to Vladichenka. So we went. She prayed very hard and then said to me, "I felt much better in my heart

as I placed a candle for your holy bishop."

Dr. Shimkin, a good woman, died several years ago, and Father Mitrophan is paralyzed now and cannot write. Now I don't know what to do.

You've probably heard that three years ago I almost died during an operation; and even now I sometimes don't feel very well. But Blessed John saved me once more. All who knew me served panikhidas for him so that he would save me. He always protects me from all sorts of troubles and accidents. I'll write to you more about this some other time.

Bless me. I'm asking your holy prayers.

sinful Valentina Diatroptov
July, 1985

39.
Intercession for a Jewish Boy

One Russian Jewish lady had a sick son, and no matter how she took care of him everything was to no avail. She was in near despair. She was told that the Russians had a "Batiushka Ioann" who served in the cathedral and through whose prayers many received healings. So she went to the cathedral and waited until Blessed John was through with the services and was leaving. She came up to him and asked him to pray for her son, whom she decided to call Misha [the Russian diminutive for Michael] so that Blessed John would not know that he was a Jew. Blessed John just looked at her and said, "I shall pray for *Moishe*" [or Moses, the boy's actual

name]. Soon after that the boy began to get well.

Vsevolod Alexandrovich Reyer
Brazil, South America
(in *Russian Life*, September 27, 1966)

40.
A Paschal Resurrection from Near Death

A nurse from the Jewish hospital in Shanghai told the following:

During Pascha week, Blessed John came to the hospital in order to visit some Russian Orthodox people who were there. Going through one of the wards, he stopped in front of a screen that concealed the bed where an elderly Jewish lady was dying. Her relatives in the vestibule of the same hospital were already expecting her death. Blessed John raised the cross over her screen and loudly exclaimed, "Christ is Risen!" The sick lady came to and asked for water; and Blessed John, going to the nurse, said, "The sick lady wants to drink." The hospital personnel were amazed at the change in this lady, who had just been about to die. Soon she got well and left the hospital.

Vsevolod Alexandrovich Reyer
Brazil, South America
September 27, 1966

41. Salvation of Shanghai from Bombing

In Shanghai in 1945, when the war was over and the first Americans came, my son brought to our place three American pilots for a visit. We had supper and were sitting and talking. The subject of the talk was, of course, the war that had just ended. The senior pilot, addressing me and my husband, said, "You here in Shanghai have a great holy man of prayer, thanks to whom you suffered no damage."

When I asked whom he was talking about, he answered that they had once been issued an order to bomb Shanghai. With only several minutes remaining before the flight, the order had been cancelled. "We know that someone was praying very hard for you, for your salvation," said the pilot.

In my mind, as well as in the mind of my husband, just one name flashed—Blessed John. Only he could have begged God with his prayers for us to be spared like that. And no matter whom I talked with about this, everyone without exception named our beloved Blessed John, our highly honored pastor, as the one.

S. Fedorova
Australia
May 11, 1963

42.
Guardian of Spanish Orthodox Christians

The Lord continually shows us his loving protection through His faithful servant Blessed John, the founder of Orthodox missionary work in Spain. I will tell you of one of his miracles, worked—unquestionably by his intercession—in our own house.

One night, my wife and I were already in bed and already asleep, at about three o'clock in the morning. Suddenly, a very strange noise, coming from the kitchen, awoke both of us. We immediately got up and saw that the freezer was burning in the rear. The flames had reached the roof of the kitchen, which was already becoming black. Beside the freezer was one window (no more than 15 centimeters away) fitted with acrylic lace curtains; this material is, as you can imagine, extremely combustible, but nothing burned. Afterwards, we realized that a portrait of Blessed John, with a piece of his riassa, was hanging on the wall which separates our bedroom from the kitchen! We glorify the Lord Our True God, and our Blessed Archbishop, whose protection was so wondrously shown to us sinners.

Jose G. Oncina Hevia
Madrid, Spain
October 22/November 4, 1977

43.
Restoration of Mental Health

Forgive me for taking your time by writing these lines and for my poor language, but I wish to share with you some things concerning my meetings with Blessed Bishop John. I was overjoyed to hear people saying that it will not be long before we will see his incorrupt relics. May that happen, O Lord!

I first met him when the Lord made me, the sinful one, worthy to spend the first week of Great Lent in the San Francisco Cathedral when Blessed John was serving. I must confess that I understood very little of all the long readings and prayers which he read himself. However, with the exception of when I had to work, I spent the whole of Great Lent without going out of the Cathedral. The first week flew by in an instant. I was in such an ecstatic state then. I experienced the same thing when Blessed John visited our Protection Church in order to consecrate it. I never spoke to him personally, considering myself unworthy of taking his time. I shall never forget the time when I was present at his funeral.

Now I will tell you of two instances when he heard me, which occurred after his death:

1. My sister Juliana remained in the Old Country and lived alone in our little house. She was alone and sick, but never complained about her fate. Only once did she

write asking that I pray hard for her, since she felt that her head didn't work right any more. She could not pray and felt dizzy very often. She had problems with circulation and eventually died from gangrene.

I was very upset and thought to myself, "What can I do?" My prayers wouldn't pierce the ceiling to heaven, but I knew the power of our holy bishop's prayers. So I had a panikhida served for him and sent her his photograph with a note saying that she herself should pray hard to him. In her very next letter she answered me: "My dear Sister! I cannot thank God enough! My head is fully clear! I can pray! I feel as though someone's hand took it all away from me. Truly, wondrous is God in His saints!"

2. When I went into retirement, a question was placed before me: where should I go so as to save myself and not perish in our frightful times? When still a little girl I had wanted to enter a convent, but the Lord had directed me on a different path. It seemed that now the time had come, although late in life, to fulfill my old dream—but where?

And so, three nights in a row I saw the same dream. Blessed John appeared before me—so clear, as if he were alive. I stood before him with trepidation, while he was clearly and distinctly pointing to our Protection Church—where I live in the rectory—and saying, "In it you shall be saved." All three nights I had exactly the same dream! So I dropped my dreaming of going somewhere, and I live happily here cleaning our church and unfailingly remembering our

dear Blessed Archbishop John. Glory be to God for all things! I beg you to kindly forgive me for having you take so much of your time to read all this. I ask your prayers and blessings.

With love in Christ,

sinful Alexandra Kiritis
Los Angeles, California
July 14, 1982

44.
Deliverance from Death

EDITOR'S NOTE: There lived in Shanghai two sisters, Sophia and Anna Chijoff, who were absolutely devoted to Blessed John. Daughters of a priest who was persecuted by the Soviets, they were compelled to flee from their village under horrendous difficulties, walking for many miles in order to cross the Chinese border. This experience made them aware of another world. They never married and dedicated their whole lives to the service of the Church, at first in Shanghai and then in America. In San Francisco they unfailingly continued to labor in the Cathedral where the Blessed One served and was later buried. Like myrrhbearing women, humbly and quietly keeping in their much-suffering hearts the wondrous miracles he worked, they followed Blessed John in absolute devotion wherever they were needed—at first to his parish, then to his orphanage and elsewhere. Upon his death they mourned him with bitter tears, being living witnesses to the mighty works of




Sophia (left) and Anna (right)
Nikolaevna Chijoff

God, wrought through His faithful servant. They survived him by not too many years: Anna died on April 3, 1973, and Sophia died six years later on February 14th, 1979. Their silent witness cannot be forgotten.

Upon our request these two sisters sent us the following brief information, which refers to the Shanghai period of Blessed John's life, right after World War II. At this time, Soviet agents were enticing Russian emigrants in China to return to Russia. Blessed John led an energetic campaign against this and thus saved many lives. But his action proved to be threatening to his life: there were several attempts to kill him. Many of his devoted people—these Chijoff sisters, altar boys, orphans, church-school students, and others—kept a watch day and night. They would

make sure that at least two or three of them were near the persecuted Hierarch. His senior bishop, Victor, was on the side of the Soviets and eventually went to the Soviet Union, taking along many followers, who all bitterly regretted this move later, when it was too late. Blessed John was right.

Anna Chijoff, the author of the following, also lived in New York City to make sure that Blessed John would be taken care of when he was at Synod meetings in that city (see Pravoslavny Blagovestnik, *no. 6, June, 1969, pp. 81-82).*

In Shanghai there was a remarkable miraculous case involving a certain "Spaniard," a man from Hailai. He was hospitalized in a French hospital that had Roman Catholic Sisters as nurses. His condition was so hopeless that he was placed behind a screen so that no one would bother him during his last moments of life. There was no hope of recovery: he was to die at any moment. Suddenly, a bell rang in his ward, a nurse-sister came and saw him sit up by himself and turn to her with a question: "Who was here just now? What kind of priest was he? I was dying and he prayed right next to me and I felt my health come back to me." The Sister said that she saw nobody.

When he left the hospital, the man visited all the Roman Catholic churches, hoping there to find the one who had healed him. One of the Catholic priests advised him to also try to visit our cathedral and look there, since, as he explained, there was an Ortho-

dox bishop, an unusual man, a kind of Fool-for-Christ.

During this time, when Bishop Victor had already gone over to the Soviets but still lived in the cathedral house, we were all upset because many Soviet agents would visit Bishop Victor. The boys from the orphanage and commercial schools made an attempt not to leave our bishop [Blessed John] alone by himself without surveillance.

Thus, one evening we came to the cathedral for Vespers. During the service we saw a man of huge proportions enter the church. He was well dressed, had a very handsome blue suit and a huge red flower in his lapel. We got all upset, thinking he was a "bolshevik."* After Vespers, when everyone went to receive a blessing at the dismissal, we saw that he was also walking up. We quietly drew closer to the Bishop, intending, in case of danger, to defend him by at least being a crowd. But, to our amazement, we saw how this giant approached the Blessed One, got down before him on his knees, asked for his holy blessing, and then explained that he had found the one who had healed him so miraculously in the hospital. The hierarch lit up, gently smiled at him and blessed him. We all uttered a sigh of relief! No danger threatened his life, but God's glory shone over him! This man thanked him, calling him a *universal hierarch*.

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*Bolsheviks often wore something red to indicate who they were, and this man's flower was assumed to be such a sign.

In Shanghai there was a certain Mother Marina, who used to instruct us: "He is a great holy man; he is a great man of prayer, an intercessor for us before the Lord, a miracle-worker, a man of clairvoyance." And she told us an incident that had happened to a certain lady who came to the cathedral, dressed simply, and weeping. This lady said that her sister in Russia had had a mental breakdown and was crazy, and that there was not any way she could help her. Everyone, of course, sent her to our holy hierarch. Blessed John, having listened to her story, did not say a word to her, but only blessed her with the sign of the Cross and left... She burst out in tears more bitter than before and began to murmur to all who were there for having sent her to someone who didn't even feel sorry for her.

About a month passed. Once when Blessed John was serving in the cathedral, this woman came back again. This time she had a letter in her hands, which had informed her that her sister, Barbara, had recovered. The lady had come to thank the Lord for it. The bishop was then censing the cathedral, walking with the censer around the church, and was approaching her. At this moment she mentally said to him, "See, without your prayers my sister got well again." As the bishop was passing by and censing in her direction, he said to her, "Well, glory be to God! Thank God, your sister Barbara got well,"—and he went on.

The poor woman was terrified; her legs began to burn;* she wished she could fall through the earth out of shame. She had been saying "without your prayers my sister got well," when the hierarch was directing her to the mercy of God, calling her sister by name although she had never managed to tell him her name before. She, of course, understood what a great servant of God was our hierarch, Blessed Archbishop John. Yes, our holy Hierarch John was indeed a universal hierarch.

Anna Chijoff
New York City, 1969

45.
Deliverance from Fire

I. *The Renewed Icon*

With joy I want to share with you and tell everyone about Archbishop John. I knew him from Shanghai, where as a young girl I attended commercial school. The bishop would often visit our school and bless us children. My whole life has been spent as it were under his wonderworking protection; otherwise, it is impossible to explain the many cases when my life was miraculously preserved from unavoidable death through his holy prayers which protected me.

In my childhood, when I was twelve or thirteen years old, I saw a dream while in

* A Russian expression for one who feels terribly guilty.

Shanghai. I saw someone take me by the hand, lead me and show me the Lord of Sabaoth, Who sat in Heaven together with all the saints. When I stood at the foot of the steps, I saw God blessing all His saints and at the same time blessing me as well. I saw a wondrous light emanating from the Lord's outstretched arms. It was so bright, like the strong rays of sunlight. These rays shone in straight lines from the hand of the Lord, from the top to the step on which I stood. Many years have passed since I saw this dream, and now I possess an icon which Blessed John loved so much to pray before when in Shanghai. The icon belonged to Baron and Baroness (Maria) Von Delinghausen, and is ancient. It began to miraculously renew itself, as many icons did at that time in the Far East. It was all dark, painted on a wooden board; and it was impossible to discern anything of what was depicted on it. Blessed John would drop wax on those spots which had begun to clear up. Now all the saints' faces are visible, and you can see the wax spots up to today. Around the head of the Heavenly Queen, the light [cleared up] spot on the halo moves like a flame that goes up and down. The icon depicts all the saints on the clouds: the Lord God of Sabaoth is enthroned above a series of clouds which serve as steps, and on them are depicted all the saints, just like I saw them in my dream when I was a little girl. It was Blessed John's favorite icon, before which he prayed many times, and was given me by the Baroness.

II. *My Mysterious Healer*

Many years passed by and scattered us all to different countries. Bishop John found himself in Tubabao in the Philippines. Later he was assigned to France, and we—that is, I with my husband and daughter Tatiana—came to Brazil where we settled in San Paulo.

In 1954 I caught the "Spanish grippe," which utterly wore me out. Besides, it repeated itself many times. I was sick for a month and a half with a high temperature, not getting up from bed. Every day my temperature was over 103°, with decimals varying, and no medication helped. Every day a doctor would come from the apothecary and would give me injections of anti-grippe and penicillin, but nothing would help. the temperature stayed that high and would not drop. There was no one to look after me, since my husband worked at the electrical station and his working hours varied. Our daughter was attending school and came home at around five p.m. because her school was far, and it took a long time to get home. So I was compelled to stay home alone. My husband would lock the house, and he and my daughter Tatiana would keep the key.

After several weeks in such a state, and all the time in delirium, I finally came to myself. That was about four o'clock in the afternoon. I remember this quite well because, when I opened my eyes, right in front of me was the clock on the night-stand. At

that very time I saw an elder at the foot of my bed. He was dressed in vestments of a gray-blue color: the very fabric of his clothing remained clear in my mind, as if it was handwoven. In his left hand he held a tall wooden staff higher than his head, and this staff was made out of a branch with knots. The elder was not of a high stature. He had not very thick gray hair that fell on his shoulders, a rather thin gray beard and a gray moustache. His eyes seemed blue. Looking at him, I did not at once recognize Blessed John, whose eyes were not blue but brown. He stood there nodding his head at me, and all the time he was blessing me. Fear fell upon me. I covered myself with the blanket and thought: how could he have come into the house when it was locked with a key? Besides, usually the floor boards would squeak here and there when stepped on. All this I had not heard: neither the squeaking nor someone entering the front door. Lying there under the blanket, I thought to myself that perhaps all this was my imagination; but when I again lifted the blanket, the same elder stood there as before, nodding his head and and continuing to bless me.

I do not know what happened next, but only that I fell into a deep sleep. When my husband returned from work and my daughter from school, they did not wake me up because they saw that I was soundly sleeping. At the same time the doctor came for the usual injection. Feeling my head, he told my husband that I had no temperature and that there was no need for the injection. However,

the doctor and my husband changed the sheet on which I slept, for it was all wet. It seemed as though I was lying in a puddle of water. I slept through the whole night and way into the next day, and woke up only by evening. There was no more temperature, but I was still very weak. In a week I got better and stronger. But who was that holy elder whom I knew healed me, since the doctor had told me that medicine was powerless and that my only hope was God? I wondered why I hadn't recognized him.

I looked everywhere, in all churches, but could not find the face of that holy elder. Now, however, when I look more often at the facial features of Blessed John, I keep finding a great resemblance between him and that holy elder who was blessing me at the time of my illness in Brazil. And I have come to a conclusion: that the Lord is guiding all by His great deeds, through the holy prayers of Blessed John.

III. *Healing of a Gall Bladder Disorder*

In 1955 we moved from Brazil to the United States and settled in San Francisco, California. Here the first of my gall bladder attacks occurred, and I subsequently had a total of nine such attacks. In 1961 was the worst, ninth attack. I was placed in Moffat Hospital on the 1st of January, and on the 2nd I underwent surgery. As soon as they opened me up, the gall bladder broke, and there was no hope of saving my life. But a true miracle took place through the prayers of Archbishop John. The doctor told me later

that, in 100% of the cases in the history of medicine, people in my particular condition have not survived. Even on my hospital bottle was written "a miracle!" The Lord returned life to me in order that I fulfill a mission placed upon me.

My brother Nicholas, who was an altar boy with Blessed John in Shanghai, got sick at about the same time. I wrote many letters to the holy bishop in France asking his prayers, but never received an answer. Only after Blessed John returned to San Francisco did he tell me that he had received all the letters and prayed. My dear brother died at a rather young age, and I survived.

IV. *Rescue From an Airplane Fire*

In 1966 we went on vacation to Lake Tahoe for a few days with our dear friend Nina Holte and her husband. Returning home, we took an airplane, while the Holte family remained for a few more days in Tahoe. They drove us to the airport and stood at the landing strip to watch our plane take off. As soon as I sat down in the airplane, I said that nothing bad would happen to us because Blessed John was with us. I always carry with me a picture of Blessed John: no matter where I travel, this photo of him is always with me.

The airplane was small, designed for only ten or twelve passengers. I sat on the right side with my husband Boris on the left, and only a narrow isle divided us. It was a wonderful sunny day, and the sun shone brightly through the window. I looked

through the window as we took off and saw the outline of pines and evergreens below us. We flew above trees which grew all over the mountains. But suddenly, nothing could be seen except blue sky in the windows in front of the pilot, who was wearing earphones and receiving messages. And from both left and right side-windows, we couldn't see anything because of some cloudiness. Flying forward, the pilot looked back all the time. I mentioned that to my husband, saying what a strange pilot he was. As it turned out, this small airplane, as soon as it had left the ground, had had a fire in both engines. Being inside the airplane, we did not even know that we were being exposed to grave danger. We were the only passengers: including the pilot and captain, there were four people in all. To be honest, I did not even feel the danger—it was far from me.

And so we flew for a long time in a burning airplane, all the way to Lakeland Airport [near Oakland.] There our burning plane quickly landed in the middle of a field, where extinguishing trucks were ready all over the place. On top of these vehicles, yellow lights flickered. The captain of the plane quickly opened the door, and some people swiftly pulled us out, throwing us instantly into a truck that came right up to our plane. The truck rushed off with incredible speed, away from the burning plane, and brought us to the Oakland airport. On the way I asked the driver about our baggage, and he answered, "Lady, forget about your baggage. We only want to save your life!"

Still not realizing that we had been in such danger, I asked him what had actually happened. "Didn't you know that you were flying in a burning plane?" he responded. As soon as we had taken off into the air, both engines had burst into flames, though we had not known or felt any danger.

At the airport we sat waiting for about three hours for them to bring our suitcases, which they did after they had managed to extinguish the burning airplane. The pilot who brought our baggage, while giving it to us, said, "The Lord must have loved someone a lot, because a plane aflame usually explodes in the air after a few minutes, and we flew for a long time and were able to land, extinguish the fire and save you and us." The pilot concluded that, "of course, a miracle occurred."

I firmly believe that, in the burning airplane, it was the flaming prayers of our great man of prayer and righteous one which saved us from unavoidable disaster.

V. *Protection From a Bullet*

We had an incident in our restaurant right on the Western Christmas Eve, December 24, 1967. Blessed John was already dead then. Right before that I saw a dream. I saw Blessed John come into our restaurant dressed all in black, looking a bit stouter than he did during his lifetime. He stopped right on the spot where the piano, with chairs around it, was located; he talked to me about something, then took me and quickly placed me behind himself, as if shielding

me with himself from something. And I woke up.

The entire next day I was very troubled, but could not explain to myself this tenseness. In the evening of December 24th, I went to our restaurant, but my upset state only increased. At this time a certain Russian young man came in. He had some argument with an American fellow and got very upset. Soon he ran out of the restaurant and in a short while returned with a gun in his hand. He went straight to that young American and stuck the gun right in his stomach. I got up and shielded the American. The gun was pointed right in my stomach now. At this moment someone jumped up from a table where several young men were sitting, and quickly moved the man's hand with the gun away from my stomach. This happened on exactly the spot where I saw Blessed John and myself in the dream. The angry young man walked out of the restaurant and fired into the first car that was parked, which turned out to be my husband's car...

Then I remembered my dream of the holy bishop who shielded me with himself, placing me behind himself and saving me from the bullet. Everywhere and always our dear Blessed John guards us, and me, a sinner, also.

VI. *Extinquishing of a Fire*

On the feast-day of Epiphany, Archbishop John blessed our restaurant two times. Each time he came with Galina Pikoulin at about three o'clock in the afternoon, blessing with holy water the whole restaurant and all

the people who were there at the time, which included my husband and grandmother, since they usually came in earlier than the rest of the employees.

The righteous slave of God, constantly serving God and people, did not forget even us sinners during his life and after his death.

In 1968 there was a fire in the grocery store on the corner of our block, right next to our restaurant. Only one wall separated us. The fire began from the back side of the grocery store. Our freezer pantry was adjacent to the fence behind that store. We had a fire alarm system working. The wires of the fire alarm immediately burned, and thus gave a signal to the police station to which they were connected. This happened at nine thirty p.m. Our daughter Tanya had just sat down to have supper when she saw a whole mass of smoke coming out from under the wall that separated us from the produce store. The smoke was escaping with incredible speed into our restaurant. I could not understand where all that smoke was coming from, since just the day before we had made a major check of all the electrical wires for fire safety. All these wires were encased in metallic tubes, so the fire could not have started from electricity.

At this moment we heard the sirens of fire engines and, looking out, we beheld a frightful sight right next to us. The entire Geary Boulevard had already been blocked against traffic. One could see only fire trucks, an ambulance and police cars. The

firemen worked like clocks—one must give them due praise. They were breaking the windows of the grocery store and fighting the fire. The fire was growing with incredible rapidity because a strong wind was blowing from the ocean, from the west—and our place was to the east of the grocery store. Geary Boulevard is laid out in direct line from the ocean, and strong winds always blow through it. The flame spread very rapidly on 17th Avenue. The fence connecting the store to the house behind it caught on fire. Part of that house was already burned out, and out of it an elderly lady was dragged and given oxygen by the doctors.

I was the last one to run out of the restaurant. Inside, everything remained active: all the burners were not shut off, because we had no time. All the people who had gathered outside were pushed away by the police to the other side of the street, because the gas in our restaurant was not shut off and could blow up any minute. It was a frightful sight. I stood in the middle of Geary Boulevard because people were everywhere. I turned westward to look at the cathedral, turned with a plea to Blessed John—who was resting beneath it in his Sepulchre—and uttered aloud: "O righteous Hierarch! Stop the fire, stop the wind!"—And at that *very* minute the wind stopped blowing, as if obedient to a command! There was no movement in the air, and people in the crowd began to talk about it aloud: "Look, look, the wind stopped and doesn't blow anymore!" I stood there petrified! I at once thanked

Blessed John for the help he sent us! The people all around were amazed, but I could not express what had taken place—I was afraid that they would explain it away in their own way.

Indeed, there occurred a true miracle through the prayers of Blessed John. Our restaurant remained unharmed—the flame did not touch it. Nothing in our restaurant was burned: even the freezer pantry that was right next to the grocery store remained untouched. It was as if the flame had jumped across the restaurant and begun to burn the fence and the adjacent house on 17th Avenue, which was severely damaged.

The next day, our insurance company changed all the carpets, painted and changed the velvet that we had on the walls. We did not close the restaurant even for a day, but only put in air-cleaning machines that sucked out smoke. The smell of smoke remained in the restaurant for almost a year, because it kept coming from next door. I often recall all that transpired, and mentally or out loud I thank Blessed John for his zealous prayers for us.

God grant the Heavenly Kingdom to thee, O righteous man of God, O great man of prayer for all of us!

Vera I. Vertloogin
San Francisco, California
May 18, 1977

46.
Disappearance of Arthritic Pain

In 1937 I came to Shanghai from Japan for a short time. My long-time friend, Fr. Vasily Chuvashev, invited me to dinner at the bishop's house in order to introduce me to Bishop John. During the meal, the hierarch asked me many questions about Japan and the life of the Russian colony in the Japanese cities. The talk lasted the whole evening.

This first conversation with Bishop John was unforgettable for me, because that evening I at once felt what enormous spiritual influence he was exerting upon my soul. Since then, contact with Blessed John was not interrupted until the very last days of his earthly life. In Shanghai and here in San Francisco, he was always to me a spiritual director. And even now, when he is no longer with us, I and many others feel his unseen spiritual influence upon our souls and hearts...

I took part in helping Blessed John to move much of his flock to America. We were then begging to be with him, but he was sent to Europe. After his departure, as always when he would leave, I felt great heaviness in my soul. But when some conflict would arise and some decision would have to be made, I almost always would see Blessed John in a dream or receive a letter from him, and at once the heaviness would disappear.

In 1963 I was sick with arthritis and remained so for a very long time. Several times I was put in a hospital, staying there for over a month at a time. I was also forced to be bedridden at home.

I was hardly able to move about. One day in June, when my family went to the Russian River, I did not go with them. I was in no condition to travel and decided to stay home because all my bones ached badly. I could not eat, drink or sleep. At night the pain increased to such an extent that I called Kaiser Hospital and an ambulance came to get me. They brought me at first to the general reception area, but when my doctor came he at once transferred me to the emergency ward for the seriously ill.

Our Blessed John was then already in San Francisco, for we were already going through those terrible days when the building of the new cathedral was being halted. With the arrival of Archbishop John the building was resumed, and donations were flowing in literally like rivers as an answer to his call. But at that time there was the court trial, that very trial which one cannot remember without pain of heart, when our dear Blessed John, our great man of prayer, was placed on the bench of the accused. This trial was in actuality a trial of our holy bishop. We know that, before the trial, Judge Day, who deeply respected Blessed John, offered him to stay in an adjacent room during the trial, but our blessed one turned down this offer and sat in court together with those who wished to be with him: Hierarchs Leonty,

Savva and Nektary.

In spite of this terrible, trying time for Blessed John, he would not forget the sick. He visited me in the hospital several times, once even with the miracle-working Kursk Icon.

I was rapidly losing weight: I weighed only 94 pounds and looked like mere skin and bones. I could eat nothing, and the pain was unbearable. And then, precisely during these difficult days of my sickness, at the end of June, Blessed John came one day and said only these words: "That's all right—tomorrow you'll feel better."

The next day the pain was gone as if it had never existed, as if I had never been sick. I remember the amazement of my doctors. They kept me in the hospital for three more days and then sent me home. I, of course, was terribly weak, so that a nurse had to come to my house and give me injections. Soon even that was not needed, and I could walk by myself and travel to see the doctor. That was an amazing miracle. Thus the grace of God touched me through the supplications of our great man of prayer.

While lying in the hospital, I vowed to myself that, if the Lord would help me to get well, I would give all my strength to serving our Church. And I at once gave myself over to this work. That was during the time that the cathedral was being built. Blessed John had invited and designated people for the new Building Committee; and I joined it, appointed by the Archbishop. Up to this day I carefully preserve the paper of my

affirmation with Blessed John's signature.

Contact with the blessed one continued all the years he was with us, and spiritually it did not cease even after his demise.... I feel his presence and I believe that he is praying for all of us before the throne of God the Almighty.

On the eve of Blessed John's departure for Seattle, just a few days before his passing away, I drove him to hospitals, as I had always done both day and night when it had been necessary for him. These two days, Sunday and Monday, were the last days I saw him alive. Afterwards he left for Seattle, and on Saturday came that frightful, bitter news of his death.

It is difficult to talk about and remember those days, which were utterly painful and terrible for all of us. But I was honored to be appointed in charge of the Sepulchre of our great man of prayer, our wonderworker, of whom I am one of the living witnesses.

I often see Blessed John in my dreams. Here, just recently, I again saw him, blessing me with the cross. I always strictly kept the fasts established by our Church. But once by mistake I ate some meat during Lent, and the same night I saw Blessed John. He came to me and reproached me, saying that I broke the fast! I saw him so clearly and vividly, as I had during his lifetime.

The frequency of visitors to Blessed John's Sepulchre increases with each year, which can be surmised from the amount of candles which are placed to burn by his coffin. More and more people ask for oil from

the ever-burning lamp at his grave, firmly believing that this oil helps to relieve their sicknesses.

Let this letter of mine, this witness, add some extra lines to the book of Blessed John's veneration.

Vladimir M. Naumoff
San Francisco, California, 1976
(from personal correspondence,
and from *My Memoirs*, in Russian:
San Francisco, 1975

47.
Healing of a Hopelessly Sick Doctor

In the Russian colony in Shanghai in the 1940's, there was a well-known doctor, Nicholas C.,* who became gravely ill. His ailment was so serious that one concilium of doctors followed another. The best specialists came from afar for consultations, but there was no turn for the better in the condition of the sick man, and his wife was made to understand that she must be prepared for his end.

During one difficult night of keeping watch at the bed of her sick husband, Mrs. C. could no longer endure the frightful despair and hopelessness. Entrusting the watch of the sick man to a nurse on duty, she ran to the "Surety of Sinners" cathedral. Her

* Churilin

only thought was to see Bishop John, implore his prayers and seek his help and support.

It was dark outside. From the hospital to the cathedral, one had to walk about fifteen long city blocks. The evening service in the cathedral had ended a long time before. Mrs. C. went to the narrow alley that led past the cathedral towards the house where the ruling bishop, John, lived at that time. In the dark alley, a small hurrying figure appeared coming towards her like a shadow. It came closer and closer, and finally she recognized it to be Bishop John. Not giving her a chance to say a word, he uttered, "Yes, I know, I know. Let's go and pray."

They entered the dark cathedral. He went into the altar and prayed for a long time there. A feeling of fervent prayer also gripped Mrs. C., and she prayed with all her soul.

"And now let's go to him," said the bishop, and they walked to the hospital through the dark streets of the sleeping city.

At the bed of the sick man, who lay there unconscious, the bishop prayed and blessed him. Then he blessed the woman and left. As always, after an inspiring prayer so characteristic of him, the eyes of Blessed John shone with a brilliant light. Later, Mrs. C. often described to her friends how the eyes of the bishop shone like the stars.

Towards morning the doctor felt better, and in a few days he began slowly to recover until he got well. He emigrated together with the rest of the Russians from the Far East, through all the phases of the evacuation. He

worked for two years as a physician in the refugee camp on Tubabao, then came to America and worked for several years, not in the full capacity of a doctor, but still in his profession.

Such was the power of Blessed John's faith and prayer. We who knew him in China, Europe or America can tell an endless amount of facts about cases when, due to the power of his prayer and his faith in God, people got well who had been hopelessly sick and condemned to die.

Olga Ivanovna Semeniuk
San Francisco, California
July, 1972

48.
Help in Asthma Attacks

My dear friends!

I greet you with the Feast of Christmas and the New Year, and I wish you good health and all sorts of good things. But especially good health. In life this is everything: when there is none, life becomes hard.

I read and reread all the time the magazines you sent me [about Archbishop John in *The Orthodox Word* and *Pravoslavny Blagovestnik*]. Since you work for the Archbishop John Memorial Society, it should interest you to know what I have already experienced several times. I suffer from intense attacks of asthma. Whenever they come, I turn with a prayer to Blessed John for this help before the Lord—and I forget all about the very existence of asthma for months, while

previously I suffered from it without interruption.

May God send you all the best. May He guard you and all your close ones.

With deepest respects,
Olga Serikow
San Paulo, Brazil
December 15, 1967

49.
Salvation from Typhus

The memory of our dear Blessed John is fresh and will never be erased in our generation of his contemporaries.

I remember him when he first arrived in Shanghai and was still a young bishop. At that time I was 23 years old, but in spite of my young years my lot was such that I had to drink a lot of sorrow and pour out a lot of tears. Every day I used to go with my little son to the early Liturgy, which was almost always served by Bishop John himself. As if feeling the state of my soul, he once so gently and compassionately asked me, "You have some sorrow?" Briefly I told him, and he understood at once and consoled me. After that he became to me a substitute father to whom I could always come for advice and consolation. From the very first day of his arrival, Blessed John was full of energetic activity, giving all his time—days and often even nights—to the sick, the unfortunate, the little orphans and to his extraordinary prayers and church services, forgetting himself, for-

getting to eat or even simply to dress himself properly, as is customary of his rank. Nevertheless, he was surrounded with many evildoing opponents who not only gave trouble to his work in various ways, but who even accused him of the most ridiculous things which are even now frightful to remember.

Yes, Blessed John did not watch how he dressed, did not take care of himself: he would wear sandals on his bare feet, would hastily put on his klobuk in any old way. This made him appear unfit for the image of his high rank. But those who knew him closely and who saw his bright, childlike smile, his kind and friendly eyes—especially when he was talking to children—those people could not help but see in him a true pastor who was giving his soul for his flock.

During the war I signed up for nursing courses, and in the course of my study I was appointed to keep watch in different hospitals and clinics. I remember how Blessed John would make visits to all the hospitals, how he would bend down at the head of the beds of sick ones, consoling and praying with them. I know that often after his visits the sick would feel better and receive a moral uplift, and their sufferings would not appear to them so terrible. There were many Russian people in Shanghai then. Many of them were also in prisons. Even there, Blessed John brought light and hope to these unfortunate ones, admonishing them, often giving them Confession and Holy Communion, consoling the incarcerated, enkindling faith and hope in them.

I cannot even begin to talk about what Blessed John did for the refugees when China went over into the hands of the Communists. It is true that no one wanted to accept the homeless Russian people, who were deprived of all rights and every possession. And all know how Blessed John on his knees, being already an Archbishop, procured permission to evacuate the refugees to islands, which they left when various countries gradually began to give refuge to them! I know that some people were thereby saved from the claws of the Chinese Communists. These Communists were not only dissatisfied with everything, but even dared to again defame the bishop, who bore all with his usual meekness.

The repulsive attack that Russians in America waged against Blessed John when he was placed on the seat of the accused in an American court, the shameless accusations, threats and slanders—these evoked only a meek smile from the guileless righteous man, who was being "crucified" and morally tormented by his own Russian people, even by his brother bishops, to whom he had never done any harm, only good!

I will not even go into details about the endless miracles which occurred both during his life and now at the site of his grave. One could write a whole book about them. I myself, a sinful woman, have also been vouchsafed to receive help from him, not only in his presence but from a long distance when he helped and comforted our fam-

ily at a time when unavoidable danger threatened us.

I.

To give a striking illustration let me cite a case of his prayerful help described by my friend, Olga Ivanovna Semeniuk, who was very close to the church and church matters in Shanghai, and who is now in America, in California:

"At one time I was made very happy, because for a certain period I was entrusted by doctors to take care of Blessed John when he was sick. In those days, I had seen for the first time in my life a man who was entirely devoted to the Lord. He did not stop for a minute in his prayers. The doctors' orders were absolutely ignored by him, and no power could bar him from church services. If it chanced that the doctors put him to bed, then in a few minutes he would be already in the altar leading the Communion prayer service. Soon I myself experienced the power of his prayers and intercessions for us sinners before the Lord.

"My eldest son B. had always been Blessed John's altar boy in church, but suddenly, on Saturday, November 16, 1943, he told me he could not go to the Vigil. He was already 17 years old. I asked him why. 'Mama,' answered my boy, 'my head hurts and there's a terrible pain in my stomach.' I became alarmed and put him to bed, hoping that during the night the pain would go away. Suddenly, at 11 p.m., Blessed John came to visit us and, asking us to leave our son's

room, remained with him alone and prayed for a long, long time. When he came out, he said, 'Do not be afraid—everything will be all right.' I did not even understand that we were in grave danger. Blessed John left. In the morning my son was in delirium with a high fever, complaining of terrible pain in his whole body. In fear we called on several physicians and they had a conference. The doctors said that we should at once get the boy to the hospital. At this time, our bishop came again, confessed and gave Holy Communion to the boy, and once more consoled us. When we brought our son to the hospital, several doctors gave him a thorough examination and made the diagnosis: our son had dysentery, pneumonia of the left lung and typhus. At once they advised us to take him to another hospital, that of the "Orthodox Brotherhood," where there was a large, warm room for our sick boy. The Russian doctor at this hospital, Dr. Alexeyenko, examined my son and said to me, 'There is no hope. Your son will not live through this.'

"In total despair and grief I ran to Blessed John. I fell on my knees before him and, weeping, begged him, 'Save my son! Pray for him! I believe only in your intercession before God!' Blessed John was in stern concentration. He consoled me somehow and then went with me to the hospital. Since that day he visited my son day and night, and all the time prayed over him. In about three days, when I came to see my son, he regained consciousness and said, 'Mother, what a shocking dream I saw today! I saw Blessed

John and I saw many doctors and nurses, and I saw myself also, as if it was yesterday, dressed all in white; and then I woke up.' I thought to myself that most likely my son would die and that I should dress him all in white. The doctors were no longer making any attempt to make him well again because they considered him near death.

"The day after this dream, my son began to recover. Thus, thanks to the prayers of our holy man, he got well and was even vouchsafed to see his future in the dream. Presently he quite successfully and with love works as a doctor himself and wears white. The late Dr. Alexeyenko and other witnesses confirmed that only the prayers of Blessed John had brought my son from the grave and incurable sickness to life. Glory to God Who has given us such a man of prayer! Glory to God that we were made worthy to live and pray with such a righteous one as our late Hierarch John! May there be eternal and good memory to him."

II.

Before me is a pack of letters of Blessed John, which I meticulously treasure. They are so hard to understand: ugly little scribblings, but such dear ones and so well comprehensible to me! My fate was throwing me to differnet countries, often very far away, and Blessed John would lose track of me, and then suddenly I would receive a letter: "Recently I was in Brussels, in the cathedral memorial [dedicated to the New Crown Martyr Nicholas II] on your nameday and

prayed for you." He remembered all. He prayed for all.

If you take the "Beatitudes," they are all applicable to him. Only one thing remains to be added: *Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven!*"

With the Saints give rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy servant, the ever-memorable Bishop John, and through his holy prayers have mercy on us!

Regina Van Setters
February, 1977
Cannes, France

50.
Healing of Appendicitis

Dear Fathers,

I am writing to you at this time to relate the following incident which happened one week after the day of Archbishop John's repose this year.

On June 25, 1977, late in the morning, I fell sick with an insufferable pain in my abdomen, with the greatest pain on my lower right side.

I stayed in my bed, and the pain persisted. In the mid-afternoon I took Holy Water and made the sign of the Cross and drank some. Then after praying to Archbishop John I drank from the small bottle of oil from the lamp that burns in his Sepulchre in San Francisco.

My landlady, who is a nurse at the Veteran's Hospital here, thought it was appendicitis and wanted to take me to the doctor. In

the early evening, when the pain had not diminished, she took me to the doctor. After examining me, he said I had all the symptoms of appendicitis and immediately sent me to the hospital where I was examined by a surgeon, who confirmed the doctor's findings and admitted me to the hospital. The surgeon did not operate immediately because he felt it was in the early stages and he wanted to wait and see what developed. Because of this they could give me nothing for the pain, which was so great that I could not sleep. Finally I fell asleep about 3 a.m., saying the Jesus Prayer, with spontaneous supplications to Archbishop John interspersed.

When I awoke, about 8 a.m. on June 26th, the pain was greatly diminished and by the next morning, Sunday, June 27th, it was completely gone, and I was released from the hospital that afternoon. Many laboratory tests were run on the many blood samples and other specimens taken from me. Although all the symptoms of appendicitis were present, the tests were all negative, showing nothing!

I thank God for this miraculous cure through the intercession of our Blessed Archbishop John. In spite of my many shortcomings and sins he never fails to come to my aid!

John Van Hulten
October 6, 1977
Huntington, New York

51.
Help in Acquiring Seminary Education

Last November I became concerned with a very serious misunderstanding that may have been the cause of my losing academic accreditation, which was needed to continue to serve God's people as a priest. After many long interviews and conferences with the academic community and authorities, all finally turned out well.

During all this time, I had prayed to John Maximovitch and had had a panikhida offered at his tomb. Mr. Boris Troyan placed my name under the Archbishop's mitre, and I was able to enjoy a certain peace of soul although these were stormy times. Within the week the degrees were cleared, and I am now happy to serve God's people as a priest.

God is glorified in His Saints as we continue to experience Blessed John's prayerful and loving presence with us.

Father Joseph
September 13, 1978
New York City

52.
Healing of Emphysema

My sister-in-law, Sophia Nikolaevna Verhitski, sent me from Santa Barbara a little piece of cotton with oil from the lamp at Bles-

sed John's Sepulchre, together with a prayer addressed to Our Lord Jesus Christ "through the prayers of Blessed John of Shanghai and Archpriest Mitrophan," who was martyred by the Bolsheviks. There were instructions from Archimandrite Mitrophan [a spiritual son of both Blessed John and Archpriest Mitrophan] to, while saying this prayer, anoint the sick spots on my husband for the course of one month.

I had lost all faith because my husband's spiritual and physical condition had been getting worse. My husband is 89 years old; he is a medical professor, and when he saw his latest X-ray, he said, "No physicians will help me—only God can. My sickness is an old-age sickness—emphysema of the lungs, which is incurable." It turned out to be cancerous and could still be surgically removed. However, while tuberculosis is now successfully treated, the enlargement of lung cells—emphysema—is not helped much even when treated surgically. Furthermore, such operations are available only to very rich people. So we placed all our hope in the mercy of God.

Of course you can imagine how overjoyed we were to receive the holy oil. I at once began to anoint my husband's chest and back on both sides, as well as his forehead as is customarily done by clergy when they anoint, pronouncing with faith the abovementioned prayer. And after that, exactly on the 30th day, there was a noticeable improvement in his breathing, the gasping for air disappeared altogether and his mind was more alert....

And now my husband is *absolutely healthy*. One thing that still remains is a very extended sleep, but they say that "in sleep all sickness goes away." His appetite is gradually returning, and we hope that he will soon get strong.

I wrote all this to my sister-in-law in California, who gave me Father Mitrophan's address.

I am asking your holy prayers and blessing for us, slaves of God Theodore and Catherine.

With much respect, your

Catherine Nikolaevna Verhitsky
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Day of the Holy Trinity—Pentecost
June 14, 1970

53.
Help in Finding Work

Deeply revering our unforgettable Archbishop John, I would like to share with others how I more than once experienced the power of miracles through his prayers.

I came to America with my son on January 25th, 1952. We came from Tubabao in the Philippines, where I had gone right from the hospital to get on the ship. Having arrived in America, we settled at the house of our sponsor. My health was very bad. Being in such a condition, it was difficult to find any kind of work; besides, we had no means, the country was foreign and the language not our own. In despair I wrote a letter to Arch-

bishop John, with tears begging him to, through his holy prayers, help me in my difficult situation. The day after I sent off the letter, I was called and offered to work in a factory.

The work was hard, but with the grace of God and the prayers of Blessed John I managed to work there for a year and a half without any trouble. Considering our disadvantage as immigrants, I clearly felt that thanks to Blessed John's prayers I was given a special inflow of strength, both physical and moral, which so wondrously appeared in connection with finding work and thus lead to success in getting settled in a foreign country.

Nina Sigizmundovna Makavoy
May, 1968
Bryte, California

54.
Healing of Fingers

The second case of Blessed John's intercession occurred when I received healing during his lifetime. I used to work at an electronic plant. I had to polish minute parts on an electric sharpening belt, about 3,000 a day. It was a great strain on my fingers, and their joints began to "jump" out of place, which was unpleasant and painful. I consulted doctors. At first they applied heat in some special manner, but it did not help. Then they operated on both fingers, but my fingers continued "jumping" in their joints as

before. In two months they again tried surgery—and my condition remained as it was. I was in despair and knew not what to do.

At that time our dear Archbishop John was to visit Los Angeles, and I went. There were many people; everyone wanted to receive his blessing. I stood to the side with my bandaged fingers. It was hard to push myself through such a crowd. At this moment, Father Boris Kritsky approached me and asked, "Why don't you ask for the holy prayers of Archbishop John?" I indicated to him the crowd surrounding Blessed John. He took my hand and energetically began to move through the crowd, asking to let a sick person go forward. I approached the blessed Archbishop and in brief told him about my ailment, with tears asking for his holy prayers.

And a miracle occurred through his prayers. After a short time I again went to Father Boris. He asked me, "How are your fingers?" Fingers? I was surprised, having completely forgotten about my fingers. My fingers were completely healthy. It was an obvious miracle. Great is the power of our unforgettable Archbishop John.

Nina Sigizmundovna Makavoy
(same as above)

55.
Disappearance of a Carbuncle

I experienced yet a third case through the prayers of blessed John. This is what happened:

While swimming in the sea I caught an infection. It developed into a huge swelling on my neck, which turned out to be a very malignant carbuncle. From it, not only my neck but even my head swelled up. They injected penicillin, but nothing helped. It would neither develop nor dissolve. It seemed to me that I would not endure any longer and would die. And thus, when it got especially bad, I used my last strength to reach the telephone and ask A.T. Simonovitch to remember me during proskomedia during Divine Liturgy. After that I took a tablet of medicine and fell asleep. When I woke up, I was told the joyful news that A.T. Simonovitch had immediately sent a telegram to Blessed John in France, requesting his holy prayers for me the sick one. When I learned about that I at once lost all doubt about my recovery. In three days the answer came from Blessed John: "I'm praying."

Since the carbuncle persisted and did not break, the doctors cut it and took some to make a culture. And only after that did they find out how to treat it. Four months passed by. When I finally got well, Dr. Rybo told my husband in my presence, "I did not expect a good outcome. Your wife's life was saved by some miracle." I knew, too, that it had been the prayers of Archbishop John which had made me healthy again and had put me back on my feet.

Always dedicated to and deeply venerating our dear Blessed John,

Nina Sigizmundovna Makavoy
(same as above)

56.
Help in Avoiding Surgery

My first meeting with His Eminence Archbishop John occurred when our church in Paris was modestly located in a garage on Ribera Street. He celebrated services there on Sundays, coming from Versailles where he resided in the Cadet Corps.

At that time I worked as a taxi driver, renting a car from a garage and paying the owner of the car a certain percentage of each day's earnings. I was regularly attending our modest church.

One Sunday our church warden offered me to drive the Archbishop to Versailles. I agreed, but the bishop was detained in church for a long time: he had to talk with one or another person to give directions or make various decisions. Finally we went. During the entire ride, the bishop was sitting next to me and talking. We remembered our cadet corps years; he was glad to know that I had also been a cadet, although in a different corps—that of Vladimir-Kiev. The whole trip was filled with lively conversation. I still can't account for who was driving the car or by what power it was driven.

When we finally arrived in Versailles, the bishop, having bestowed a blessing upon me, let me go. Only then was I able to start my work. I was disturbed with the worry of whether I would be able, having lost so many precious work hours, to give the necessary

sum of money to my boss. But my worries were in vain: my work went so successfully that in a short time I collected a greater sum of money than necessary. I was incredibly lucky. I do not doubt in the least that my exceptional success was sent to me through the prayers of the bishop for the service I had rendered him. Later on, I drove the bishop many times and never had to worry—I was always extremely successful.

When Archbishop John founded in Paris, on Claude Lorrain Street, the wonderful church dedicated to All Saints of Russia, he also had there his modest cell and conducted services in this church every day, if he could. On Wednesdays and Fridays of Great Lent, he served the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, during which only three of us were in the church: the bishop in the altar, where Father Mitrophan served with him, and I in the cliros. In his serving, this great man of prayer knew how to express and evoke in others a great power of faith and diligence in prayer.

When I was the secretary of the parish council of our church, I was convinced—not only during meetings, but also during business encounters—how wisely, how simply and with Christian love the bishop knew how to solve the rather frequent complicated questions. During his time our church and parish blossomed because we were protected by his saving prayers.

I remember such a case. Among our parishioners there was a couple named T.S. The husband got sick and was taken to

the hospital, where the doctors offered him the only treatment that would save him: immediate surgery. The sick man sent his wife to Blessed John to ask his advice and blessing. The wife came to the church on Claude Lorrain Street, but did not see the Bishop—he had gone to Brussels on business. Father Abbot Mitrophan said to her, "Blessed John calls me every day at a particular hour. Soon I will talk to him and will tell him about the sick man." So they agreed, and when Blessed John found out about the proposed operation, he thought for a while, evidently prayed, and said, "No need of surgery—he'll get well." The next morning, the sick man did not agree to be operated on and was removed from the hospital. He got well and is still alive today.

I personally had such an incident. In 1965 I signed up for the annual group pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Ten days before the proposed departure I unexpectedly became sick with some strange ailment, which was in such a severe form that any trip was unthinkable. I at once hastened to write to Blessed John in San Francisco and informed the pilgrimage leaders. Three days prior to the departure of the group, I received a letter from Blessed John. Not a word about my sickness in his letter! He blessed me to go on the pilgrimage and even entrusted to me, as a frequent pilgrim to the Holy Land, two new pilgrims. Having received this letter, I automatically "forgot" all about my severe sickness and pains. With the blessing of

Archbishop John, the pilgrimage of that year turned out to be the most grace-filled.

I can also say that our godly Hierarch was performing his last service in Europe—a Divine Liturgy at the Lesna Convent—when our Lord sent me His great mercy: He allowed me to serve the bishop in the altar in a sticharion for the first time in my life, fulfilling in this way my fervent wish. I believe this had special significance.

Our Blessed John is undoubtedly now at the throne of the Most High God and does not cease praying for us. And we here on earth must run to his intercession, asking his holy prayers. For we know that the ever-memorable Archbishop John is God's man, and his canonization by the earthly Church is merely a matter of time.

The truth of the above I can witness to with an oath.

Nikolai Ivanovich Boutchinsky
Montmorency, France
March 7/20, 1977

57.
Healing of Brain Disease

I.

I came to Shanghai in 1946. Being quite young and following after fashions, I used lipstick heavily. Once I came into the cathedral when Bishop John was serving. At the end of the Liturgy I came up to him for a blessing, intending to kiss the Cross; but he did not give it to me to kiss. I stood aside

and waited for a while. Then again I went up: he blessed me but did not allow me to kiss the Cross. I was leaving the cathedral almost crying and said to some lady that the bishop had not allowed me to kiss the Cross. But the woman said, Look at yourself—how heavy is the lipstick on your lips!" Since then, in my whole life I have never put on lipstick when going to church, and I thank Blessed John for it.

II.

From Shanghai, I left together with the Russian emigration to the island of Tubabao in the Philippines. All who came were placed in sectors. Together with us in our Eleventh Sector was a Russian lady by the name of Olympiada Elnik. This is what she told me:

"I lived in Shanghai with my elderly mother in a tiny room, which we got with great difficulty. We paid a rather large sum of money for the key, as was customary there. It was very hard to get an apartment, and without a large sum of money it was nearly impossible to get a room. The landlady of our house was a very grouchy, nervous woman, but we endured her because we had no other place to go. One day she came and very crudely declared that we must move out because she was selling the house and that by such-and-such a date our room should be vacated. Our tears and pleas did not do anything to her. Mother and I were in despair, knowing full well that it was simply impossible to get a room anywhere. We did not know what to do. A thought came to me to go and

ask Bishop John for prayers. I had heard that the bishop prayed in the cathedral all night long. I prepared a letter in which I described our trouble, begging his prayers.

"At 4 o'clock in the morning, when it was still quite dark, I came to the cathedral. It was open. I entered and it was very frightening. The entire empty cathedral was dark; only here and there lampadas were flickering before icons. Looking around, I saw a silhouette that was kneeling near the iconostasis on the right side. This was the bishop. Timidly I approached him and stretched out my arm with the letter to the bishop, asking his prayers. But he pushed my hand with the letter aside, blessed me and said, 'Go with God—all will be well.' I left, and only then remembered that out of fear I had not said anything about our trouble. He did not take my letter—how would he know what I had asked him to pray for? I came home depressed and went to bed. Early in the morning someone was knocking on the door. Having opened the door, we saw our landlady, who smiled politely (as we had never seen her do before) and said to us, 'I decided not to sell the house. Remain and live here as long as you need to."

This was told to me personally, and I do not doubt its validity. Olympiada is a religious and honest woman who lives now in Australia.

III.

I believe that my daughter's life was saved through Blessed John's prayers. When

she was ten years old she became sick with meningitis. Blessed John twice visited her in the hospital with the wonderworking Kursk Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God. Thanks to his prayers she got well and the sickness left with no consequences. Glory to Thine all-powerful might, O Lord!

IV.

Now I must say something about myself. All my life I have seen prophetic dreams before some vitally important moments, and they have come true. I saw Blessed John, and I shall remember this as long as I live for it strengthened me in my faith.

Soon after the death of our archpastor, I saw this dream: A huge temple was filled with people who were loudly and bitterly weeping over the death of Blessed John. I was standing in an adjacent room of rather small proportions, near a coffin, as in a sepulchre. In that coffin I saw Blessed John. I came closer and looked at his face. With trepidation in my heart I saw that his eyes were open. And he, with a piercing, concentrated gaze, was looking straight into my soul as he had done during his life, and was observing me lovingly and with obvious joy. I was greatly moved in my heart. With joy and excitement I went to the door that led into the main church, swung it wide open and began to shout loudly to the people there: "Stop crying and lamenting! I know that our archpastor is alive—I saw his eyes! Don't cry—he is alive! He is happy! He is alive! He is alive!" And so I woke up shouting that Blessed John was alive.

V.

My childhood friend and fellow-student at the Convent School [in Shanghai], Alla Leonova, lost her husband. When he was in Mukden in 1945-1946, he was taken by the Soviets and sent off to a concentration camp in Siberia. Alla had to raise two children by herself. When she found herself, as many did, on the island of Tubabao in 1949 before going to Australia, she went to Blessed John requesting permission to start divorce procedures, since there was obviously no hope of ever seeing her husband. Blessed John said, "If you want to, go ahead, but you will still see your husband." The words of Blessed John came true. After 28 years, in 1977, her husband came to San Francisco as a result of her daughter's successful attempts.

In May of 1978, Alla got terribly sick. A dangerous virus got into her brain. They telephoned me and said that she had already been in a coma for five days. Several priests came and prayed. The morning after the telephone call, I went to the cathedral, had her name sent to the altar during Liturgy and then went downstairs to Blessed John's Sepulchre. I slipped a little commemoration note for Alla's health under his mitre on his sarcophagus. I was later informed that, during that very hour of the morning, she had opened her eyes. Glory to Thy power, O Lord! Glory to the power of Thy servant's prayers! At first Alla's memory was weak, but soon after—to the amazement of all the

doctors—she began to recover, and the sickness left her without any consequences! The doctors say that, with this ailment, even if people remain alive, which happens rarely, there are always bad consequences.

Often I, a sinner, sorrow and pray and cry because I am spiritually blind and stupid. I often think, O God, O God!—Such a great Saint and man of prayer, of such great spiritual power, walked amidst us, and we—not we, but I—valued him so little. Generally we are not too smart, not farseeing sheep. We do not value our pastors. Alla says the same. Forgive me, Blessed John, forgive me, a sinner and unworthy one!

With love in Christ,

Vera S. Terehov
July 27, 1978
San Francisco, California

58.
Recovery from Skin Burns

We knew Blessed John very well when living in Shanghai. Our son was serving in the altar with the holy bishop, who had a special place in his heart for him and for us. We know many undeniably miraculous events which were witnessed and testified to by word of mouth from many. But not so many were put in printed form. That's why we anticipate our accounts, as brief as they are, seeing the light of publication.

When we came to America from China, we settled in Monterey. Blessed John visited us several times when his former acolyte, our son Vladimir, was attending school. We even have a good photo of us together with the holy bishop outside the Monterey St. Seraphim Church, where our son also served as an altar boy for Fr. Gregory Kravchina, the pastor of that church.

I must confess that several unpleasant incidents occurred in that parish, which dampened our fervency towards attending church. But since Archbishop John kept on writing to our son not to abandon church, our son felt compelled to frequent it and did this quite diligently. But I murmured. One day, upon being reminded to give rides to church, I complained, saying that under such a strain it is not worth the gasoline that it takes to get to church....

Very soon after that a very terrible thing happened to us. On May 2nd, 1954, I was alone at home, trying with gasoline to take stains off a rubber raincoat. I was in our small porch; all the windows were closed. Since there was a gas heater that was turned on, an explosion occurred. All was in flames and I was burning. I jumped out and immersed myself in a pool. Our neighbor called an ambulance. A doctor came and said that it was a miracle that my eyes had remained whole, since even the glass in the windows had burned. They immediately took me to a hospital, where I lay for several days. They brought me home on a stretcher, and a doctor would visit me with a nurse every day. I

lay at home for seven months. Both my arms and legs, from my heel to my knees, as well as my face and neck—were all burned. I could not sleep because everything was covered with pus that was wet and would not dry. The doctor would make a daily change of the dressing and bandaging, but nothing helped.

It was only after seven months that I remembered about Blessed John and wrote him a letter, saying, "Four doctors said that I will be an invalid for the rest of my life. My only hope is in your prayers." We mailed the letter and I began to count the days until he would receive it. Five days passed by, and on the evening of that day I said to my husband that the bishop would receive my letter, would pray for me and I would be better. That night I slept the whole night without any trouble until 6 o'clock in the morning. I was surprised that my feet had become a bit drier and everything had begun to change for the better. When at 4 o'clock the doctor came to do the bandaging, he saw and said that it was a miracle. I quickly began to recover and am now perfectly well, although of course I have traces all over my body of that terrible accident. It was confirmed later with the bishop that he had received my letter and had obviously prayed. Without his holy intercession, God knows what would have happened.

Mr. and Mrs. Vladimir Syrakuzov
August, 1967
Pacific Grove, California



OPPOSITE PAGE: Blessed John with the Syrakuzov family, who contributed testimonies #58-61, at a church in Monterey, California, 1959. Left to right: Mrs. Syrakuzov, her son, Mr. Syrakuzov, Blessed John and altar boys.

59.
Removal of Eczema

There were many true wonders worked through the prayers of Blessed John, even in our family. While in Shanghai in 1935, right after our wedding my husband contracted eczema, and in all his body folds moisture collected on his skin. It was awful. We tried all possible remedies, and nothing helped.

On my husband's nameday, July 15/28, he went to church and received Holy Communion. I asked the clergy to serve for us a Molieben for the sick, separate from the others; but due to the fact that it was St. Vladimir's day and there were many who bore that Saint's name, the clergy came out after the Liturgy and served a Molieben for all. When I saw that this common Molieben was finished, and that the priest went into the altar and left the church, I went to the candle stand and asked for a separate Molieben; but they told me that it was too late because a

common Molieben had been served. I was upset that I had only two dollars left, and burst into tears. I stood at the door steps and wept copiously. Suddenly, Blessed John came to me and asked what was the matter. I told him that I believed in the prayers of a Molieben, but in a common Molieben I did not believe. Then the bishop told me to calm down. They went to fetch the priest, who was already walking down the street. The priest began to serve while the bishop himself went into the altar and began fervently to pray to God. They were serving our Molieben for a long time. When it was finished, Blessed John came out of the altar bringing an icon of St. Vladimir, blessed my husband with it, and calmly said: "Go with God and all will be well." And to our surprise, soon after that my husband's malady disappeared—and has never returned up to today!

(same source as above)

60.
Immediate Termination of a Prolonged Illness

While in Shanghai, Blessed John never used the ricksha services, considering it not right to use human beings, who were created in the image of God, as animals pulling other human beings. Because of this he walked everywhere, and of course frequently to all the hospitals.

My friend was placed in the Jewish hospital, and Blessed John came to visit her. This Russian Orthodox friend of mine told all about him to the patient next to her, who was Jewish. The Jewish lady said, "What a pity—I am of a different faith, and your bishop will not pray for me." She had been bedridden there for two years. When Blessed John came to visit my friend the second time, she said to him, "What a pity—you will not pray for my friend here, because she is Jewish." Then the bishop said, "Before God all people are equal." He went to ask her what her name was and began to pray.

After several *days* this Jewish lady recovered! She came to our cathedral to Blessed John and said to him, "You prayed for me, and I am well. I want to embrace Orthodoxy." But the bishop replied that, if it was only because she got well that she wanted to become Orthodox, then the reason was not right and he did not want to baptize her. That was in the 1930's.

(same source as above)

61.
Deliverance of the Homeless

Mrs. Granovsky, who is now living in Miami, Florida, told us the following:

When she and her family arrived in Shanghai, they were without any money and were placed to lodge in some classrooms on a temporary basis because of their poverty. This was in the School of Commerce, called

"Remi." They stayed there about two months, but by the 15th of the following month they had to vacate because the school sessions were to be resumed. In distress, not knowing what to do, she went to see Bishop John. He looked at her with an intense countenance, and then said, "Do not worry. You will move out on the 15th." She wondered how this could be, since her husband was unemployed. But Bishop John said quietly, "Go with God!" And precisely on the 15th of that month, her husband unexpectedly received money from somewhere, and they could happily move out just as he had foretold to them.

There was an interesting case of how Blessed John healed a sick son of a very highly esteemed man in Manila in the Philippines; and another case of a paralyzed American woman in San Francisco who sat in a wheelchair for years and then got up. Blessed John came to that poor woman with the Kursk Icon. Unfortunately, I do not know the details. It would be good to find out.

(same source as above)

62.
Saving of an Eye

We came from Iran to San Francisco in March of 1963 and had hardly settled when in May my 17½ year old son Michael had a terrible accident. I believe that through the prayers of Blessed John he was miraculously saved.

On our arrival in San Francisco, we met another family that had also just come from Iran. Their older son, George Nazarenko, was the same age as Michael, and both boys became altar boys of Blessed John. George bought a car, and the two friends drove it around with great excitement. One day in May, somewhere around San Rafael, there was a car accident on the road, and the car with Michael and George at full speed smashed head-on into the flat-bed of the already overturned car. George's nose was broken and his face wounded. The right side of my son Michael's head was badly ripped apart, and his right eye was hanging out of its socket. I was immediately called to the hospital in San Rafael and rushed there. The situation was critical: his life was at stake.

When we arrived, Blessed John was already there. I am still amazed, wondering how he could have known and, being so busy, could have come so quickly there. When I came it was he who greeted me and began to console me. I was moved and began to apologize, saying that he was so busy and yet came here, having so many other duties. To this he said endearingly, "Matushka (I was not a priest's wife), your son will be all right. God will save his eye." I said that of course we appreciated this, but that he was so busy, etc.. He assured me that it was his duty to pray for the sick, and told me that he had been personally present during the whole time the doctor had been operating. That good doctor saved Michael's eye, put in 36 stitches and, although the cost was

$23,000, he charged only $2,000 because we were poor immigrants. George's nose underwent plastic surgery and is all right now.

I always had great respect and veneration for Blessed John, and felt awe in his presence. I would always seek his blessing and try to be present whenever he served. Our life in America was blessed through his holy prayers, and my son's life and eyesight were miraculously saved. Although now, 23 years later, he often gets terrible headaches because the nerves on his forehead are all damaged, he is in fully good health, working a responsible job at an air-conditioning firm. My two daughters, Elizabeth and Tatiana, as well as my mother, can bear witness to this account.

Olga N. Viysousev
Sacramento, California
August 21, 1986

63.
Finding of a Lost Friend

Dear Fathers,

Thank you so much for your recent issues on Archbishop John. Both Zinaida V. Julem and Fr. George Larin's accounts of their experiences with the blessed one were extremely inspiring and soul edifying. They both helped to increase my devotion. I pray that many of those fortunate ones who have lived with the Archbishop will write accounts of their time with him.

Please allow me to relate one miracle related to Archbishop John that happened to my wife and I while we were traveling across the country this summer. Before leaving San Francisco, we had visited the crypt of Archbishop John to ask his blessing. Receiving a prosphora at that time, we were certain if we carried it with us, we were carrying Archbishop John's blessing with us as we traveled. We visited my father in Aspen, Colorado. One day when we went to pick up some pictures we had taken, I was waiting in our car and got an impulse to move the car to another location. Just then I saw a very close friend of ours who was a member of our church in Indianapolis. We had not seen him for years. He explained that he had done so well in his schooling that he had been sent to Aspen to work for the music festival there for the summer.

We invited him to my father's home for prayers. He told us that he had some oil from Archbishop John's tomb, but had only used it the past three days, praying that he meet some people he knew. We all shared part of the prosphora and thanked God for the intercession of His saints. I know that it was Archbishop John that brought us together.

God bless you,

Jacob Myers
Atlanta, Georgia
August 13, 1986

64.
Preservation of a Child's Leg

I feel close to Blessed John because every time I pray to him I feel an *immediate* warm and loving response of what I believe sincerely to be his spirit or presence from the place where Saints reside with God. The spiritual response I feel is very pure, holy and comforting as of course is the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom Blessed John must be very close to.

Recently, my five year old son jumped out of the back seat of our large Chevy wagon, and his entire left leg was pinned sideways under the back tire as the car rolled to a stop. He screamed, and my husband was stunned and afraid to back the car up until he could jump out and see exactly how he was trapped under the car. By the time he got to my son and I slid over to the driver's seat to back the car off of him, his leg had been completely under the weight of this 9 passenger vehicle almost a full minute.

We carried him gently in the house as he continued to scream, and somehow I was graced with a deep peace and calm as prayerful mothers sometimes are. I *immediately* felt moved to pray to Blessed John Maximovitch. I put my hands on his leg where the tire tread deeply marked his leg. We sat prayerfully for several minutes and our son became very calm. I felt completely reassured by Blessed John that "all was well;" yet as com-

mon sense dictates, we felt something in his leg or knee could be crushed or broken and decided to take him for an X-ray right away. Confident in Blessed John's *immediate* healing response that is there *every* time I pray to him for my children, I felt we'd be lucky if for the next 6 months his leg would be simply black and bruised and rotten looking -- I prayed intensely that no permanent damage had been done.

Well, the doctor found no bones broken or fractured at all, saying it was a miracle. When our son went to sleep, the tire tread marks had turned purple. (This all happened around 7 - 9 p.m. in the evening). By the next morning there was *nothing* (not a mark or bruise) on his leg whatsoever, and I was in wonderful spirits. He limped slightly that first day, and by late evening and the second day he was running and playing on it as though nothing had ever happened ... Blessed John had reached out and blessed my little boy and healed him completely with the love and gentleness of Christ. I am so grateful to Blessed John and am personally *convinced* he is a Saint that dwells in Heaven now regardless of formal canonization. I am only a mother with three children (and a fourth on the way). But I know that only a *Saint from God Himself* could bring so much love, kindness, comfort, warmth and immediate healing and joy to my children's little temples and spirits.

Blessed John has touched me in my heart, because no matter how great or small my need, when with a sincere heart I pray,

he has always responded. A mother often needs a companion who dwells in Heaven, and I am humbly thankful to God our Father in Heaven for His wonderful servant, Blessed John, whom He obviously performs many miracles through.

Not long ago, when the other side of the duplex we were living in became available, we were very excited to move over to the other side for many reasons: it had more room for raising children, garden space, bordered a large park, etc., etc.. Little did we know that, since the whole building had just shifted owners, the new landlord intended to increase the rent quite dramatically so that we couldn't afford to live there. We informed him that we'd be looking for somewhere else to live. Well, we looked and looked and could find *nothing* up to our standards within the range we could afford. Finally feeling desperate since we had to be out of our side within another week, I prayed to Blessed John for a home for our family where our needs could be met. But I left the particulars completely in God's hands to know our needs, through His servant and miracle-worker Blessed John. Within 10 minutes of my prayer, our landlord knocked on the door and told my husband it was worth it to him to keep us (he could already see from visiting with us on several occasions that we'd take good care of his newly purchased "investment"), and he offered to lower the rent to what we could afford on the other side which we really wanted

to live in. Not only that, the landlord filled the place with a brand-new carpet, and he and his son painted everything so it was quite lovely to move into.

These are such physical things I'm speaking of, yet as a mother and homemaker, for our home to be a place for the One True Church to manifest, and for it to be a place of prayer and worship - our cell - set apart for our family from the influences of the fallen world (at least to the extent that we don't allow that fallen world in), it is important to me that God would choose such an important place for us.

Thank you, Blessed John Maximovitch, for hearing my humble prayers. I trust so much this wonderful Saint! Glory be to our Loving Father.

Love to you in Christ our Lord,

Deborah Kuolt
Portland, Oregon
August 23, 1986

65.
Mystical Contact with the Hearts of Children

by Bishop Savva of Edmonton

I. *A Word to Children*

Blessed John had an absolutely unique relationship with children, a special sense with them. I currently have several notes on the subject. But let us foreword them

with his own sermon which was written for the children of his St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Orphanage, and which he sent them when he was on an extensive leave of absense from them in Europe [by that time the orphanage had been moved to San Francisco, California]. What warm fatherly words! What simplicity and power is contained in this sermon, what care that appeals to a child's conscience!

Entrance of the Theotokos
into the Temple
November 21, 1952

Dear Children!

Already beginning from this day, in the Church services we sing, "Christ is born, glorify Him!" This announces to us the advent of Christ's Nativity, and we are thus called to prepare ourselves to meet Him.

What is meant by this preparation? It means that one should condition one's soul in such a way that it can be, as it were, a manger for the Christ Child. The Feast is to help us in this. At the end of the Nativity Fast, the Church especially praises the Three Youths and the Prophet Daniel, indicating them to us as models for emulation. And in what way have they become famous?

You know, when they were growing as children and being brought up in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar, they denied themselves all the fancy foods at the king's table and ate only vegetables, so as not to break the law of the Old Testament Church.

For such abstinence and obedience to the Church law, God rewarded them by giving them wisdom with which they surpassed all their peers. Through the experience of fasting, their souls became firm, and thus they could reject the king's demands to bow down to an idol. And when, because they did not fulfill the impious decrees, the Three Youths were shoved into a burning furnace and Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, the Lord preserved them from all harm. Hymns about this are sung every day at Matins, reminding us of the heroism of those youths, and placing them as examples for us.

Children! You find yourselves now in a situation similar to that of those youths in Babylon. We are surrounded with people who do not know the Orthodox Faith and do not submit themselves to the laws of the Church. Before you is a choice—either to fill yourselves with all the foods forbidden by the Church, or, like Ananias, Azarius and Misael, to freely reject what is forbidden. With whom do you want to be—with these youths, or with those against them? Do you want to imitate these saints who are the same age as you, or do you want to go the broad way, disdaining all rules?

A lot of manliness and strength of character (firmness) was demanded from the Three Youths in order for them to fulfill the Church laws and patristic traditions—after all, they were only four amidst a countless multitude of unbelievers. For this the Lord in His mercy glorified them before the whole world for all ages. The Lord will also reward

each one of you for this, if you will follow the example of these youths.

Whenever you are tempted to please yourselves by eating that which is eaten by others who do not know the divine laws of the Church of Christ, remember Daniel and the Three Youths. Then give an answer to yourself—are you with them, are you ready to follow them and be under God's protection, or are you more interested in enjoying sweet things which perhaps seem harmless, but which in actuality make us breakers of that which made those youths strong, glorious and unconquerable. *With whom are you, children, and whom do you want to follow?*

May the Lord protect you from temptations. May He strengthen you and may St. Tikhon of Zadonsk teach you to go on the right way.

May the blessing of the Lord be upon you all, my dear children.

Your loving Archbishop John

II. *Healing of a Child*

There are many touching stories of how Blessed John would mysteriously know where a sick child would be, and at any time of day or night would come to console and heal. (See the amazing story of George Kalfov below.) In return, children responded to him spontaneously. He never treated them in a condescending or pedantic way, but had direct contact with them. What is even more remarkable is that even after his death he would appear to children and develop mystical con-

tact with them from the unseen world where he is now enjoying eternal bliss.

Here is a letter sent recently by Priest Peter Semovskikh about his son Constantine, the little "Kotic." It illustrates that special spiritual contact between Blessed John and the souls of children. Here is what he writes together with his Matushka:

In 1967 we went from Australia to America, to New York City, and on the way stopped in San Francisco to visit our relatives. Our little son, Kotic, was not even walking yet then—he was only one year and twenty days old. On the day of our arrival we were in our uncle's living room, which was all covered with carpets, and Kotic was crawling all over the place. He crawled to a little table with a very sharp edge, then wavered and fell with all his weight on this edge, hurting his left eyebrow right near his very eye and cutting it to the bone. Blood rushed out in a stream. We all got frightened and immediately began to apply medicine, but it did not stop bleeding. by morning the eyebrow was greatly swollen, the wound was not healed and the eye was half closed. All this looked awful.

We decided to go to the "Joy of All Who Sorrow" Cathedral and the grave of the late Archbishop John. We had never seen him during his life, but had only heard much about him from our relatives. People in Australia had asked us to serve a panikhida at his Sepulchre. Kotic received Holy Communion that day. After a moleben, which was served

because it was the nameday of Metropolitan Philaret, we placed Kotic on the mantle of Blessed John which was on the sarcophagus. Kotic at once began to cry and kiss the mantle. He cried so copiously that we could barely calm him down; he did not want to leave, holding tightly to the mantle with his little hand and crying. When we came home to our uncle and began to put Kotic to sleep, as is customary for a little child after lunch, we noticed that the swelling was gone and that instead of the constantly flowing blood there was just a strip of dry blood. We examined him and found nothing wrong: the eye was clear and unhurt. Glory be to God, through the prayers of the Righteous Bishop!

Later, when we lived at the Synodal House in New York City, Kotic got sick with the "croup." Twice we called a doctor to our house. He gave us medicine and gave an injection, but said that the best medicine was steam baths. We lived in one room and had no bath, not even a sink. I had to be running to the common bathroom across the hall. After the steam Kotic would get better and breathe freely. This croup is a throat sickness: in the throat some tiny scabs would appear and would grow larger and larger, causing the child to choke. So steam baths would help to soften these hardening scabs. But about a half an hour later he would again begin to suffocate. In spite of all our attempts, Kotic did not get any relief. Because of weakness, on the fifth day of his sickness he could not even lift up his head any longer. At one point he fell asleep for a

while, then suddenly awakened and asked to be held up. He showed that he wanted to go to the side of the room where we had a bowl of fruit on the table. So we thought that he had an appetite, which was a good sign since for five days he had been fed only with sweet water. When we brought him to the fruit, he pointed with his finger further, to where a portrait of Archbishop John was standing. He took it, placed it on his head and began to cry bitterly. We placed him on his bed together with the portrait and he at once fell asleep. We told all this to Father Nikita, who immediately telephoned San Francisco to have a panikhida served over the coffin of Blessed John. And after that day Kotic began to get well.

Once while playing in the living room, Kotic suddenly ran into the kitchen all frightened. With excitement he told us in his children's talk that Blessed John had just come into the hallway, smiled at him and knocked with his staff. We showed him a photograph of the Bishop and he began to assure us that it was he.

Now we live in New Diveyevo Convent, and here again a strange incident took place. Waking up after a midday nap, Kotic told us: "Blessed John visited me, blessed me and patted me on the head. He was in a blue dress (he meant a riasson) and his mantle, klobuk and staff, and he was talking with me."

"Well, what did he tell you?" we asked him.

Kotic answered, "Blessed John said not to tell anybody anything."

No less than a half an hour later, our friend D.S. Kulikovsky came in and brought us postcards of Archbishop John, in which he was photographed in a blue riasson with a klobuk and a staff, only without a mantle. We were amazed at such a coincidence and began to ask Kotic how he had seen the Bishop. Kotic stated that that was exactly how he had seen him, only with a mantle. We told all this to D.S. Kulikovsky, who then took out a large portrait of the Bishop and asked, "Well, what did the Bishop tell you?" But Kotic was silent. Later, he did say to our friend after all, "Blessed John told me not to say anything to anybody." Then it became clear why he was silent: it was because he was fulfilling an obedience to the request of the Bishop.

Thus, through such invisible but apparent contact, we know Blessed John from personal experience. Unfortunately, during his lifetime we were not able to meet him, but we deeply revere him and consider him a saint. I personally pray to him and see that he hears and helps. Actually, a lot of wonderful things can be heard about him, both from eye-witnesses and from the words of others—there is a whole sea of stories.

Generally speaking, one must say that Blessed John is a kind of "watershed," especially in our time, between people. One can observe many clear examples: those who are venerating Blessed John turn out to be people dedicated and faithful to the Church

of Christ, and those who do not venerate and even defame him, reveal themselves to be pursuing mercenary aims and filled with conceit. That is why it is so consoling to see that there are still venerators of Blessed John, and hence people of oneness of soul and mind. May God bless and help those who labor in glorifying Blessed John. There are less and less people, even among the clergy, who hold in reverence this great ascetic of our days, but that is not surprising. After all, Christ Himself said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

Fr. Peter Simovskikh
Brisbane, Queensland
Australia

66.
Healing of a Protruded Spinal Disc

I wanted to tell you about a miracle I had with the oil from Blessed John's Sepulchre in San Francisco. Last month I got a protruded disc, from lifting something heavy. I've never had such incredible back pain. It happened in the morning, and I struggled through the day hoping it would ease up. It didn't, so that night I went to one of the leading chiropractors in the city. He told me what it was, and that there was a lot of inflammation, which I was to treat with ice packs. Before bed, my husband John anointed my back with Blessed John's oil and I

went to sleep. A few hours later I woke up and there was only some stiffness. The severe pain had gone! When I went back to the chiropractor the following day, he was really surprised and said he didn't even have to work on the disc. It was just fine! I was so grateful to Blessed John, and to God for hearing the prayer of His Saint for me, a poor sinner.

Kathy Langston
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
December 18/31, 1986

67.
Healing of a Thumb, Eye and Back

I first heard of Blessed John at least a year and a half ago through somebody in my community (I don't remember who). At that time, it was a case of little more than curiosity. Living in San Francisco not far from his place of rest, I went there to pray and experienced a great warmth of soul. I don't know how else to describe it, but there was the tangible presence of a great Saint there, that was unmistakeable. But at that time I knew so little of Blessed John—his life, his writings, his place in the Church—and I had no references, no books, nobody to ask about him, so I prayed to him to help me to know him better. A couple of days later (this was probably October, 1985), I went to the bookstore of the Holy Virgin Cathedral to see again if I could find something about Blessed John, and I was milling around when I found

myself drawn to a large photograph of Metropolitan Philaret in a bookrack. I picked it up to more closely examine it, and right behind it, completely hidden by it, was a xeroxed copy of *Blessed John* by Bishop Savva, held together by a paper clip! I was told that the book itself had been out of print for some time, so I don't know how I would have found anything like it otherwise. Incidentally, I was overjoyed when I heard that this book is going to be reissued soon. The English-speaking Orthodox world really needs to read about such a miracle-worker and lover of God and humanity.

The first healing which I received through Blessed John happened in December, 1985. Every year, our community puts on a Yule Mart to raise money for our children's school. Individuals with various skills come together to make handcrafted items to sell. I was working on stringed musical instruments, using a drill press. This was the Saturday before the Yule Mart, and things were not nearly finished, so I was feeling rushed and my concentration was off. At one point the wood I was working on got jammed and twisted suddenly, pulling my left thumb into the bit of the drill press. It got caught in the blades, and the skin over the knuckle got shredded. After bandaging the finger, I found that the tip of it was numb and, of course, I was unable to bend it at all. People with medical experience told me it would take weeks to heal—yet there was still much to do in the next week. Then I remembered that one of my roommates had visited Blessed John

and had gotten a bottle of oil from the lamp in the Sepulchre the day before my accident. So when I changed the dressing, I put a couple of drops of oil on my thumb and prayed that I would be healed at least enough to be able to continue my work. I did this for three days, and on the third day the feeling had returned and I could bend the thumb enough to go back to work. A few days later, it was almost completely healed, and those who saw it said that it had healed much faster than they ever would have expected.

The second healing took place a month or so later. One of my eyes was beginning to hurt one day, and upon looking in the mirror I discovered a sore on the bottom of the upper eyelid. I didn't know how it got there, but it was getting worse rapidly. By the middle of the day it was very painful to blink, and at that time I remembered Blessed John and I put a drop of his oil on the sore. Soon I became very sleepy and so I took a nap for an hour or two. When I awoke, the pain was completely gone; and when I looked in the mirror, I could see no trace of the sore, either. This pain has never recurred, and I never found out what it was.

The third healing took place just prior to Pascha, 1986. For the last five years I have been employed as a carpenter; and several times during those five years I have had severe muscle strains in my lower back. I tried chiropractors and acupuncturists and they sometimes helped, but the symptoms would always, eventually, return. Last Holy

Week was one of those times. One of the things that aggravates the pain is standing for long periods of time. During Holy Week, of course, there is much prayer, most of it done while standing. By Holy Saturday, the pain was so bad that I was forced, first to kneel, and finally to sit on the floor of the the chapel with my knees pulled up to my chest. So here it was, the eve of the holiest day of the Christian calendar, and I was sure I would be unable to stand for services and not even sure I would be able to attend at all. Therefore, before going to sleep that night, I prayed to Blessed John for help, took a drop of oil and made the sign of the cross on my forehead. The next morning, it was halfway through the services that I realized, with great amazement, that I had been standing all morning and had felt no pain! And I have had no trouble with my lower back since then, either.

And so it is with great thanksgiving to God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Theotokos, and the tireless servant of God and man Blessed John Maximovitch that I add my testimony to those of countless others who have experienced the miraculous intervention of a true Saint of these times. May his Glorification by the Church come quickly!

Zachariah Liebmann
November 6, 1986
San Francisco, California

68.
Healing of Peritonitis

In Shanghai, there was a boy about 9 years old. He was severely sick. His parents thought that he had a stomach problem. The pain was terrible day after day. For three days the boy could not lift his right leg. He was lying down on the third day when Bishop John's acolyte came to them, knocked on the door of the family and said, "Vladika told me to tell your son to go to the hospital right away." So the parents started to get him up. The boy could not lift his leg because the pain was so terrible. They took him to the hospital; it was at noon. And when the doctors looked at him they said, "This boy is going to die because he has peritonitis. We might not save him—it is too late." So they took the boy right away to surgery, operated on him and gave him three days to see whether he would survive or not. If he would survive this crisis—he would live.

This was Saturday, October 7th, as I remember. Late in the evening, about the time that the vespers service finished, the boy woke up and there was the bishop standing there, and he said, "George!"

The boy looked up. He did not have to go too far to get his life back. That boy was me.

George Kalfov
February, 1982

69.
Healing of Intestinal Maladies

On October 22nd my colon ruptured during the night. It felt as though my insides dropped down to my groin. As I got sicker and sicker that night I was scarcely able to sleep. Finally the next morning I went to the doctor and we decided that I should try to take an injection for pain in the hopes that it was merely diverticulitis and would pass.

After four hours of this it became apparent that I was getting worse. By now my fever was 105 degrees.

Finally, an ambulance came and took me to the hospital in San Antonio. There, there was a very big commotion in the emergency room because our doctor here in Blanco had referred me to a particular hospital since he wanted me to see a particular surgeon. The hospital was part of the Humana Hospital chain. It definitely is not a charity hospital. Unfortunately, the Monastery has no hospital insurance. This caused the admissions people to be very reluctant to even allow me to have the emergency tests done that the doctors requested. I spent the time praying. After several hours, and the arrival of a relative with cash, finally the emergency tests were done.

The surgeon came in to see me and told me that my colon had ruptured. He explained

that it had been seventeen or eighteen hours since this occurred and that I was very, very badly infected with peritonitis. I asked what my chances were. He said that he felt the odds of my living through the surgery were a good ninety percent. But he could not give me anywhere near this kind of hope for my living through the peritonitis.

I realized that I was probably going to die. Immediately, all my sins came before me. I had a profound sense that I wished I had more time to repent. I began to pray even more fervently. In a few moments I realized that I would have to rely on the mercy of an abundantly merciful God. I asked Father Pangratios, who was there with me, to call on the closest Orthodox priest and to ask him to bring me Holy Communion and to come and hear my confession. I asked the doctor to wait thirty minutes in order that this might be done.

After Father Pangratios came back to me after making the phone call, I gave him a number of instructions regarding the future of the Monastery. I told him to bring Archimandrite Vasili home at once, and gave messages for Father Vasili to him. After a short while of this I felt as though affairs were as much in order as they could be, and at this moment the Priest arrived. He heard my confession and gave me Communion and they rolled me into the operating room. There the anesthesiologist noticed my prayer rope and asked me if I was praying for my life. I told him that, no, I was praying for him and the

surgeon that God would guide them. He seemed a little shocked.

The next thing I remember is laying in intensive care and, looking up, seeing Vladika John Maximovitch (a recently declared saint, whose Glorification I participated in). He approached towards me and told me, "It is not yet your time." Others also saw his presence. At this moment I realized that I was still alive (for at first I thought that I was approaching the Heavenly Realm). Many people had been praying to Vladika John throughout the surgery for my healing.

The next day, everyone was prepared to begin the long battle with peritonitis. My fever, however, suddenly disappeared. Vladika John, no doubt.

I lay there with a tube up my nose and down into my stomach pumping bile from my stomach for twelve days. I was not allowed even a drink of water during this time. Now everyone was concerned because my colostomy had not yet begun to work. Finally it began to work. The tubes came out, thank God. After three or four more days I was discharged. Coming home, I have had plenty of time to pray, as I did laying there in the hospital, fasting those twelve days.

Having come close to my death—I prepared myself to die. Now it is as though every moment is a gift from God. I know that this gift is not for myself but for the Church. Pray that I may use the gift wisely and that I may be responsive to those things

that Christ calls me to for the good of the Holy Church.

Bishop Benedict
New Sarov Monastery
Blanco, Texas
November, 1986

70.
Relief from a Rash

We in St. Louis were delighted to receive our pastors—having been over a year without any—and they have brought such grace to our church. Just before they came, I had developed a rash on my arms and legs. It was slight at first and not very annoying, but it would spread stubbornly. As soon as one spot would clear up, another would spring up. My doctor could not identify it, but said it was only external and gave me medicine to rub on it. I went through three tubes of medicine and three months of concern that this rash would not leave. Finally, I asked our pastor for a healing blessing.

He first gave me a bottle of oil blessed by the Blessed John Maximovitch, and instructed me to anoint myself and apply it to the rash. I was familiar with the saving grace that comes from this oil, because many people have used it in our community before, and every time someone has used it, there has been great blessing given. I was ashamed that I had not thought of asking for it before.

I took it home, and after three days my rash was gone. There were faint spots where it had been, but no bumps as before. Praise to God! I thought afterwards that it was good that I had not thought of asking for it before, or I would probably have assumed it would have healed of its own accord. Now I know that the prayers of Blessed John interceded for me to help my stubborn sin be cleansed. Thank God for the grace of His Saints!

Martha Mills
St. Louis, Missouri
December 18, 1986

71.
Healing from Neuralgia and the AIDS Virus

I would like to write about two miracles that occurred in my family this year. They came about with the prayers and help from Vladika John.

Our twenty year old daughter, Lara, began having severe headaches last February. They were first diagnosed as migraine, then stress and eventually as neuralgia. The pain continued through March, April and May. Great Lent came and so did Pascha. She is a very devout person and did everything possible to get better—a molieben to the Icon of Our Lady of Kursk was said; she went to Confession and took Communion several times. She used the cotton from the

myrrh-giving icon from Montreal to anoint that part of her head that was in pain. After seeing many doctors and finally leaving her studies at college and taking an incomplete, she went with us to a new doctor—the seventh. He diagnosed severe occipital neuralgia—which means that the occipital nerve had cracked and the nerve was open like a live electric wire. The only cure, besides medication, was calmness. That was impossible because the pain was constant. With all the medications, which were all narcotic, her mind was being affected and she was getting worse. One of our dear friends suggested writing to Vladika John and pouring out our hearts to him in a letter and sending it to Father Ilya in San Francisco. We wrote the letter immediately and mailed it that afternoon from the post office. Upon receiving the letter, Father Ilya said a panikhida for Vladika, and put the letter under his mitre [which is kept in his Sepulchre]. The day of the panikhida, our daughter felt that a burden had been lifted from her, and she began to tell us how she had been feeling all these months. Several days later we received a letter from Father Ilya. I called him immediately to tell him that something was happening to Lara. He mentioned that he had served a molieben for her that morning. That morning Lara had stopped taking all medications. She told this to us much later.

We had been told that a psychiatrist should talk to Lara and we had made an appointment for the next day. He confirmed

Lara's illness, but, as a person, she was quite normal and there was no need to see him unless she herself wanted to do so. The next day I left Lara sleeping and went to work. Lara called me about ten o' clock in the morning. She related the following: She woke up and felt that she was not in bed but floating above. It was a weird feeling because she knew that something had happened. She got out of bed and still felt as if her feet were not on the ground. Then she realized that there was no pain. She felt light-headed, full of energy and joy. She had not understood what we had done, and when we explained that Vladika had helped her, she did not understand and looked at us in amazement. She continued to gain strength and became her old self. We called Mrs. Troyan in San Francisco to tell her the good news, had a molieben said and Lara went to Confession and Communion. Then we received a bottle of holy oil and a photograph of Vladika. Lara said that Vladika looked familiar, but she had never seed him because he died just before she was born. Months passed, and Lara, looking at the photograph one day, remembered where she had seen him.

Several months before she had become ill, she had had a very bad dream. She came down the stairs in our home and saw that in our living room the icons were hanging upside down, and a figure in black holding a black cat was standing. She knew it was the devil and tried to run away but could not. Out of nowhere a small figure in black grabbed her hand and ran outside with her.

She saw the face but did not know who it was until recently when she remembered the dream. It was Vladika who saved her months before she became ill.

The second miracle involves a relative very close to us. She wanted to join the Coast Guard but was having a very hard time passing the various tests. The last test was a blood test for the virus AIDS, which is a required test. It came out positive. She was told all the negative aspects of that disease and was told that they, of course, could not take her. A second test was ordered that day with the results coming in two days. I called Mrs. Troyan and explained that a panikhida should be said for Vladika the next day as well as a molieben. Father Ilya did so the next morning. When the results came in the next day they were negative. The Coast Guard did not believe this and another test was ordered. It took several days for those results, but they also came out negative. She was asked to join.

Vladika again helped a suffering person—so that she would have another chance at life.

I have always looked up to Vladika for help in everything—small things—and he has helped me out. These were two very big favors, and he did not forget me. The only way I can repay him is to spread the word about him to others who also seek his prayers and love. Thank you, Vladika, for hearing my humble prayers.

Irene Dutikow
Flushing, New York
December 29, 1986

72.
Relief from Insomnia

I want to relate to you an experience I had with Blessed John Maximovitch. It happened in this way:

It was late in the night in August, and I had been having a terrible time with hay fever. It would keep me up at night and I could not sleep. This had been going on for 2-3 weeks, and I was about at my wit's end. I was totally exhausted, on the brink of despondency. It was about 3 a.m., and I had not yet been to sleep. My nose would constantly run, and my head and sinus were all stuffed up. So I arose from my bed and went to my dresser where there was an icon of Blessed John. As I looked at it, it was radiant and shining. I prayed to Blessed John: "Please let me sleep, please help me to sleep. I need some rest so badly." Then I went back to my bed. Right away I fell asleep and had a dream of the Blessed One. In my dream I was riding in a car, looking all over the city (it seemed to me it was San Francisco, but I do not know for sure) for the place in which Blessed John was serving the Liturgy. I found it—he was serving outside in a big place, and I had to walk down a long avenue to get to where he was. I walked up to where he was sitting, and he came and laid his hands on my head. I felt the most wonderful blessing flow from his hands into my being. It was very powerful.

This sweet peace flowed into my soul and filled me with its sweetness.

When I awoke, the blessing I received from Blessed John stayed with me, and I still feel that extraordinary sweetness and the power of that blessing...

I will tell you another story about our Saint. The father of our pastor, Rev. J., has cancer, and the doctors have given him from six months to two years to live. Once a week a few of us get together and do the canon to Blessed John and dedicate it to Rev. J.'s father. One night—right after we finished the canon—his mother called to say he was in critical condition, but that she was feeling extraordinarily calm, peaceful and accepting of the whole thing—though up to this point she had been pretty hysterical. Then the next day she called to say he had amazingly recovered, was no longer in critical condition and was doing much better. And he has been feeling pretty good. He still has cancer and is going to chemotherapy treatments, but is doing well. Rev. J. just went to visit him. I had given Rev. J. an icon of Archbishop John, which he took with him and gave to his father along with a bottle of oil from the Sepulchre. He told his mother and father all about Archbishop John, and they believe him and are going to pray to Archbishop John and use the oil because they have felt the effects of his intercession for them.

So our Saint is busy at work. And I have to say that when I sing the canon to Archbishop John for Rev. J.'s father, I al-

ways feel the most wonderful blessings from him. He is truly close to us and loves us. I love to do the canon to him.

While I am relating these stories, I may as well tell this one: even though it is little, it is very important to me. Just before Christmas I wanted to have Confession, and previously I had been having a hard time confessing because of my hard-heartedness. I just didn't feel contrition for my sins, and this was excruciating to me because I felt so burdened. So I sang the canon to Blessed John with the prayer that he would please intercede for me and make my heart soft so that I could confess my sins. I sang the canon with this prayer in my heart, and then I had Confession. The tears flowed and my heart was softened—the Lord was merciful to me through the intercession of our Blessed Saint. Glory be to God in His Saints!

Elaine Herndon
Indianapolis, Indiana
Sept. 19 and Dec. 30, 1986

73.
The Miracle of the Button

Forgive me for such a long silence. I was very seriously sick. My heart for about 3 years was in a very lamentable condition. Several times I lost consciousness, so finally I was compelled to call an ambulance and to hurry with surgery. My heart was in such a bad state that I could have died any minute. Then one day the following happened.

Our church's feast day, Ascension, arrived and I wanted to go to church. Having got there, I hurried to get to the balcony where the choir is located, so as not to fall on the stairs. As I sat down on a bench, I passed out and landed on the floor. They attempted to revive me but could do nothing. A gentleman from San Francisco was present in the choir loft, and he was also attempting to bring me back to consciousness. Suddenly he glanced at a button of Blessed John pinned to my chest. He unpinned it and, calling on the help of Blessed John, blessed me thrice with that pin. I at once "resurrected," sat up right there on the floor and was surprised to find myself sitting on the floor and being asked what had happened. Afterwards I felt fine, went into the back yard garden and even stayed for the common meal after the service.

But the amazing part was that when in the morning I was getting ready to go to church, I forgot to pin that Blessed John button on myself. So I had to return for the button and pin it on myself.

Isn't that a miracle? More than once the holy Hierarch John saved me from unavoidable death. Much of that has been written [see pp. 353-6 in this book], but still much is left to be written, and now it is not possible. I do not forget you in my prayers; in the morning and evening I pray for delivery from persecution so that you can continue to preach our True Orthodox Faith and glorify our ever-memorable Archbishop John. I ask

your blessing and holy prayers. Forgive me for the long letter.

Nina Sigizmundovna Makovoy
Sacramento, California
December 17, 1986

74.
Intercession for a Newborn Infant

On April 28, 1980, after a troubled pregnancy and several spontaneous miscarriages, my wife delivered our first child, a 30-week premature baby, weighing only 3 pounds and a few ounces. The baby was put in the Intensive Care Unit and looked to improve when suddenly a heart murmur started. I knew that this could mean surgery, a task extremely difficult considering the small size of the baby. We prayed to the Holy Mother of God and various saints to help us. I also asked God through the intercession of Archbishop John Maximovitch, and I promised also to write to you about this. Four days later, on a Sunday, during the Divine Liturgy the murmur suddenly stopped. I found out about this after the Liturgy, when I went to the hospital. The doctors were also amazed at the improvement. The baby did well since then, was dismissed when weighing 5 pounds and has been baptized and chrismated in the Church of St. Barbara, in Durham. Glory be to the Holy Trinity, to the Mother of God, to the Saints and to the blessed memory of Archbishop John.

In the love of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Gregorios Palamas Cognetti
Durham, North Carolina
Theophany of Our Lord, 1981

75.
Raising of a Paralytic

Yesterday after Vespers, my friend Olga A. C. told me of a miracle that took place in a hospital here in New York City. On Saturday a priest well known to her, who served in another jurisdiction and with whom she was great friends, called her and told her in distress that there was a man dying in the hospital. This man was a choir director in the church where the priest served. The priest was actually summoning Olga to a podvig (heroic, ascetic deed), for the man in the hospital was dying from cancer. He had undergone surgery, but it was already too late: he was to die that night, which was Saturday night, the eve of Christ's resurrection as celebrated in the Orthodox Church every Sunday. The hospital where the man lay was far away, in a very run-down neighborhood, and it was dangerous to go there at night. Olga, of course, did not want to go there, but the priest insisted, stating that no one wanted to go there and help the man's wife, who was very tired and was frightened to remain alone with her dying husband.

Finally Olga, who had great reverence for the recently deceased Archbishop John,

agreed to go. She turned to the great and holy prelate Archbishop John, so that he would help her in everything and that she would not be afraid to walk those slummy streets at night, by doing which she could lighten the suffering of the wife of the dying man. Fortified by the prayers of Archbishop John, she took along some holy water. Incidentally she remembered some holy cotton that had been blessed on the relics of Great Martyr Barbara and that her mother had brought from Russia. She took a little piece of it and went to the hospital. Having arrived safely, she was met by a nurse (a Roman Catholic nun) who would not allow visitors to come to the sick during the night. In distress, Olga stood there and thought: "What shall I do? Oh, Blessed John, help me!" And suddenly the sister told her, "All right, I will lead you to the sick man." That alone was already a miracle.

The petrified wife was at the deathbed of her dying husband. She took the cotton from Olga, dipped it in the holy water and anointed with it the forehead, eyes, cheeks and lips of the sick one. The man was paralyzed, and one arm hung there like a rag. After some time, the wife again decided to do as she had done before, and as soon as she began to moisten the lips of the sick man with the paralyzed arm, he firmly grasped her arm and regained consciousness.

In the morning, the doctor was simply stunned at the change in the state of the sick man. And yesterday Olga again went to visit the man's wife. She arrived and saw

the man sitting relaxed on the pillows and eating something. His wife told her that all the doctors in the hospital were constantly visiting and were amazed at what had taken place: all confirmed that this was of course a miracle.

All the time, Olga had been mentally praying to our great Sufferer, Blessed Hierarch John, that he would help. She is under a deep impression of what took place, and she believes that everything that occurred was the invisible work of the holy hierarch, an answer to her pleas. After all, everybody who knew the sick man was convinced that he would die that night.

Knowing Olga A. C. very well, I can testify that this is another case of Blessed John's miraculous intercession.

Anna Chijoff*
New York City
Friday, December 16/29, 1967

76.
The Clairvoyance of Blessed John

I. My friend Mrs. Popova, who lived for years in Shanghai when it was occupied by the Japanese, told me of the case of Mrs. Vandenburg, who now lives in Berkeley and with whom I've had contact. Mrs. Vandenburg

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* See also testimony no. 44, pp. 319-24.

was the wife of a well-to-do man from Holland. The Japanese arrested him and sent him to a concentration camp, and at the same time her son George caught some terrible disease and was seriously ill. She wrote a letter to Bishop John, and the very next day her son was absolutely well. The Vandenburgs became very dedicated to the hierarch, and thenceforth were great benefactors to him in his philanthropic activity.

II. There was another lady in Shanghai by the name of Elizabeth Ivanovna De Blaise. She was a very beautiful lady who liked to dress fashionably and to have a good time. Her husband, Michael Arturovich De Blaise, was a captain in a merchant fleet, and was from the noble family of the De Blaise counts. Before the Russian Revolution, he was a lieutenant in the Russian fleet. His predecessor escaped from France to Russia during the French Revolution.

The following took place in Shanghai. One night, Elizabeth Ivanovna saw in a dream Hierarch John, whom she hardly knew. In this dream he was summoning her to church. So in the morning she decided to go and take a look at the hierarch whom she had seen in the dream. It was the same man. When she, at the end of Liturgy, approached to kiss the Cross which he held in his hand as is customary, to her amazement he raised the Cross high above her head and would not allow her to kiss it. Here she found out that he did this because she had lipstick on. She was terribly angry,

and reached a state of indignation. She stepped away with hatred and decided that she must come to him and demand an apology for insulting her. However, when he met her he said calmly, "I'm so glad that you came to me. I need you badly to work in my orphanage." She was stunned and realized that that was the reason why he had summoned her in such a mysterious way.

She worked for him with great zeal to the very end of the Shanghai emigration, and was one of the most dedicated persons he had. Between them, however, there were differences. Once he handed her a letter to be passed on to someone else. Since it contained a reprimand, she was embarrassed and did not give it to the addressee, but instead carried that letter in her purse for a very long time. One day, Blessed John asked her, "Did you give the letter?" "Yes," she answered. "What a pity," he said. "I regret what I wrote there." Then she said, "Ah, here it is. I did not give it."

I knew this Elizabeth Ivanovna well, and heard this from her own lips. She was a very good woman, in fact of remarkable kindness. Now of course she is dead. Her family lived before us in that ground-floor apartment on Divisadero Street. That apartment was very damp, and she suffered from arthritis, from which she died.

III. The miraculous healing of Dr. Vladimir Semeniuk in his childhood took place in the following way. As little boys, Vladimir and his brothers were always accompanying

Blessed John, even at night when he would visit the sick. When the youngest brother, Boris, would get exhausted, the oldest, Vladimir, would carry him on his back. They were altar boys in the church. Once when Vladimir got seriously sick, the bishop came and said that they should not become despondent; then, however, no one thought it was so serious. It turned out to be pneumonia and still other dangerous sicknesses. He was taken to the hospital, where they considered his case hopeless. But the bishop kept visiting him and praying for him, and he got well in spite of the fatal danger.

It is not true that Bishop John did not eat anything during Great Lent. Vladimir's wife, Olga Semeniuk, testifies to the following:

While in Shanghai, Blessed John was poisoned several times through food. It was so dangerous that the doctors gave him only two months of life, and recommended that he drop everything and go to a Chinese sanitarium. He, however, would not agree and requested that Mrs. Olga Ivanovna Semeniuk prepare his food for him. The doctors told her that she should agree to this, since he would not live for a long time, anyway. But he began to get better.

She fed him the following way. During Cheesefare Week, she would make for him cheese dumplings, *varenniki* with sour cream, and similar dishes. Then, during the first week of Great Lent, he did not eat anything

nor drink coffee or tea. On Saturday he would eat soup made from vegetables, but without oil. As for the other days of the week, he ate food without oil on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. During Passion Week, when she fixed vegetables for him, he told her, "Cook them separately"—that is, either just carrots, or pure beets, or potatoes, so that the vegetables were not mixed up with each other. Of course, this was without oil. During the Christmas (Advent) fast, he went without food during the last week, and Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays he went without oil. Olga Sememiuk would bring the food herself, and would watch while he ate so that no one would touch the food. If for some reason she was unable to do this, the food was prepared by Anna Nikolaevna Chijoff, a virgin of holy life who died recently, just two months ago in San Francisco. Her sister Sophia is still alive.

Here is an example of how people were attempting to poison him. Once after the Paschal Liturgy, having consumed the Holy Gifts and having come out to break the fast, he vomited. Anna Chijoff gathered the vomit and buried it in the garden. This was before the eyes of everyone. It was very possible that the guilty man was Priest Medvedyev, judging from what Fr. Peter Triodin told us later. It looks like this poisoner was a priest, if the vomiting occurred after the consuming of the Gifts, because the poison was placed into the *zapeefka* [cup of wine and water used to clean the chalice] or into the chalice

itself. This is similar to how Emperor Alexander III was poisoned. Emperor Alexander was poisoned by Dr. Zaharin, who later came to America and even boasted about it.

Olga Semeniuk was the president of the ladies committee which helped to found the orphanage. The ladies, seeing the impossibility of Bishop John's idea of an orphanage, at first protested. But Olga began to go from door to door, to all the markets, to the grocer, to the baker, etc., and they would send food. Then benefactors were found, and thus the orpanage was begun. The ladies of the committee had been afraid to begin without any capital, actually without a penney.

Concerning this Priest Medvedyev, Fr. Peter Triodin told us what a repulsive personality he had. During the time of the church upheaval in the early 1960's, he published in the Russian newspaper "The Dawn" terrible slander against Blessed John. But then when his end arrived, he begged forgiveness of Blessed John, and of course Vladika rejoiced. Medvedyev and the editor of "The Dawn" had been Blessed John's avowed enemies. In Shanghai, Medvedyev had been outrageous.

Olga Ivanovna knew much about the bishop. When he arrived in Shanghai, they prepared for him white sheets, blankets, etc.. But then they saw that they laid there without being used, so they folded up the bedding and sent it to South America, to his parents.

Helene Y. Kontzevitch
Berkeley, California
January 23, 1972

77.
Blessed John the Quick-Hearer

As I promised, I'm writing for you two more remarkable events which took place as a result of my pleas to my dear Blessed John. In 1982, my Phillip, after the course of his medical treatment, wanted to go with me to America in order to visit all the holy places there. Since he had already visited America several times and knows enough English to get by, I agreed to go with him. (Of course, I did it mostly for him, thinking that it would be of great benefit to him). So much the more because an Archimandrite sent me a check in memory of my dear bishop, Blessed John, in order to cover the cost of a ticket; otherwise, of course, I would not be able to go. Somehow we scraped together enough for a ticket for Phillip, having economized here and there. To tell you the truth, I did not particularly look forward to this trip, especially because it was right before Christmas, and this was the first time I would be away from my church during such great feast-days. It was only because of him that I agreed. But it happened that on the eve of our departure, when we had to buy the tickets, Phillip "happened to have" no money: he spent it, not having said anything to me, hoping that I would somehow find enough in my savings, of which I unfortunately had none. I was in despair and did not know what to do. I knew that if he realized

that we would not go, it would be a catastrophe for his temperament. And then I turned to dear Archbishop John: "Dear Vladichenka, if you think that this trip is for the benefit of Phillip, then help us out. And if not, then I will endure anything that is inevitable in such a case."

And what do you think? That very day I received a notice from the post office that there arrived a money order of 7,700 franks made out to my name—exactly the sum of the needed ticket. I ran to the post office as fast as I could to find out if I could receive this money right away, or if I had to wait until they transferred it, as is always customary. It turned out that the money was already in the post office and that I could receive it without any difficulty. And they gave it to me right away, in spite of the fact that I did not take with me any identification card, which they usually demand even to receive a very small sum. I said nothing to Phillip until our return from America. I indeed thanked the kind bishop. He, my dear one, always sees my troubles, and helps.

At the same time, when we were in America, I was able to buy red lampada glasses for church, since we have none like them in France. When we went to New York and other places, I absolutely forgot about them, even though I saw in churches those very lampadas. But when we were in the Sepulchre of Blessed John on the last day before our departure, at the very moment I entered that church I remembered that I need those glasses. Then and there I at once bought them,

and only sometime after I returned to France did I realize that it had been Blessed John who had reminded me about them, and that it had been precisely from his church that he had sent them to me.

And here is another case, just as remarkable. When Blessed John was with us, once he told us about the miracle of St. Archangel Michael in Chonae. He gave to me a little paper icon of this miracle, said that I should cover it with plastic and pointed to the spot where I should hang it. I did exactly as he said. But after the departure of Fr. Mitrophan, another priest was appointed. He took that icon from the wall and put it somewhere. I asked him several times to return it to me, but he told me that he did not remember where he put it. Many years after the departure of Blessed John to the Lord, I tried to find exactly the same icon, but I couldn't find it. Then two years ago, going to church to light the lampadas, I remembered that in a few days would be the feast-day of the miracle of St. Michael in Chonae. Not giving account to myself, I spontaneously said, "Dear Vladichenka, can you help me to find that icon?" And on that very day, I received a letter from Hieromonk T., in which there was this very icon. I immediately covered it with plastic and hung it on the same spot which Blessed John had indicated to me. And you cannot imagine what a joy it was for me, what happiness.

I beg you to forgive me for such a long letter, but I am not capable of writing normal letters. You yourself correct it. May our

Lord and His Holy Mother, through the prayers of our dear and unforgettable Hierarch John, protect you.

Loving you in the Lord,

unworthy Zinaida Julem*
Paris, France
December 10/23, 1986

78.
Help to the Lesna Convent

EDITOR'S NOTE: Several persons in France, as well as the sisters of the Lesna Convent, have informed us time and again of Blessed John's intercession in their private lives, as well as his being instrumental in finding the convent's new location, in Provemont.

I.

Dear Fathers,

You ask us in your letter of January 14/27 to tell you how Archbishop John Maximovitch helped us to find the new location of our monastery.

But I am afraid that, although we firmly believe that Archbishop John performed many miracles, we have no proof that this was one.

Here is the story of our coming to Provement. You probably know that our convent was founded nearly a humdred years ago (in 1885) with the blessing of the Optina

* See her memoirs in Part I, chapter 7.

Staretz Amvrosy and St. John of Kronstadt—we have a letter of the latter in which he says, "I have always helped and always will help the Convent of Lesna."

Well, when we managed to escape from Communist Yugoslavia we were allowed to leave, but not to take any money with us; so we came to Paris penniless. Some Catholic sisters received us for four months until some Catholic monks, who owned a house in Fourqueux, let it to us for 15000 fr. a month. One of our Russian friends asked our Abbess (Mother Theodora reposed in 1976) how she thought to pay this rent. Matushka calmly said, "I have neither five nor fifteen thousand so I am quite indifferent to what sum I must pay." "But what are you counting upon?" asked he. "You must have something real." "I am counting upon the only real thing in this world," said Matushka, "the help of Our Lord, Our Lady and the Saints—it is I who am a realist, not you." It turned out that Matushka was perfectly right—we never failed to pay the rent.

Some years later, when Archbishop John was already in France, our landlords told us we must either buy the house in Fourqueux or leave it. We collected some of the money needed, when the monks suddenly changed their minds. But meanwhile Archbishop John had to leave Versailles. We couldn't allow our Vladika to become homeless so we gave him all the money we had collected and he bought with it and the money he himself had, a house in Paris where there was a place for a church, too. Later he went

to the States and died suddenly, without repaying all the sum we had given him.

On October the 19th, the day of St. John of Kronstadt we were told to leave Fourqueux, for the land was requisitioned by the government.

The old sisters who had known St. John personally and remembered his coming to Lesna said that there was no need to worry—Batiushka would certainly give us something better than Forqueux—only we had no money to pay for it. But then the money began to arrive in a most miraculous way. We were sure it was Our Lady and St. John, but also Vladika John repaying his debt, who sent it; but as you see we cannot prove the latter's help nor even attribute all this solely to his prayers, although we know he always prays for us. He gave us a wonderful token of his loving care on the very day of his death. On that day he sent us a letter (evidently mailed just before Liturgy) in which there were only these few words: "I send my blessing to you all together and to each of you apart." We have no doubt that he knew he would die that day and sent us his last blessing.

We ask for your blessing and holy prayers.

With love in Christ,

Abbess Magdalina and all the sisters
Provemont, France
January 22/February 4, 1981

II.

The Clairvoyant One

During the time of the absence of Blessed John from his home in Versailles, Lydia S. died in Medon near Paris. One of our sisters from the convent came to read the Psalter over the deceased. When Vladika returned to Versailles, his secretary P. S. Lopuchin began to report to him: "In Medon died..." The bishop interrupted him and said, "Yes, I know—Lydia. And the Psalter was read by a nun from the Lesna Convent." This was exactly what had happened.

The Saint

There was in a hospital in Paris a certain sick Alexandra Lavrentievna Y., and the bishop was told about her. He relayed the message that he would come and give her Holy Communion. Lying in a common ward where there were some 40-50 people, she felt embarrassed before the French ladies that she would be visited by an Orthodox bishop garbed in extremely shabby clothing, and barefoot at that. When he gave her Communion and left, the French woman in the adjacent bed said to her, "How fortunate you are in having such a spiritual director. My sister lives in Versailles, and when her children get sick, she chases them out onto the street where that bishop usually walks, and she asks him to bless them. And always after this they get immediately well. We call him a saint."

The Healer

A certain Roman Catholic priest who visited the sick in Versailles would frequently come to Blessed John with a plea to pray or to visit his spiritual children, believing that this would give them healing, which often occurred.

We ask your blessing and holy prayers.
With love in Christ,
deeply revering you,
unworthy Nun Anna
Lesna Convent
Provemont, France
July 13/26, 1977

III.

Uncreated Light

...An occurrence was related to me by an old nun from Lesna. When she and the other Sisters were living in Lesna, Blessed John often used to come up to one icon in the church, that of the Iveron Mother of God, which he apparently liked very much and before which he used to pray. Once, when he was thus praying before that icon, this nun came in and saw that...Blessed John was surrounded in radiant light and was standing not on the ground, but above it!

Zinaida V. Julem
Paris, France
Summer, 1978

79.
Healing from Internal Poisoning

For the long duration of my collaboration with Archbishop John, I had time enough to evaluate him as a great man of prayer and of righteous life. I was working in the capacity of church warden and secretary for a number of years. Aside from being in charge of the Western European Diocese, the Hierarch also had under his supervision the French Orthodox Church of the Western Rite, which was and still is being intensely slandered. During his life, accusations multiplied against Archbishop John because of his supportive relations with this church. When Archbishop John received a new assignment to the Western American Diocese and when he was departing for San Francisco, he gave me instructions to remain in the French Orthodox Church, to be in contact with them, even to serve as a subdeacon. The administration of the Western European Diocese was reorganized and moved to Geneva. The ruling archpastor, still as a vicar bishop, always warred against Archbishop John. Fr. Mitrophan, who remained in France after Archbishop John's departure, also left for San Francisco. Then B. N. Trezvinsky left Paris, and soon after that Archbishop John unexpectedly died in Seattle.

In September of 1971, I became gravely ill. I was immediately operated on. The sur-

geon said that it was not cancer of the intestines, but a severe case of bile poisoning, and at the same time I had a fit of appendicitis. That night, after the operation, was an absolutely critical time. I myself and the medical personnel thought that I would not live until morning. They would constantly check my blood pressure. I would lose consciousness and then come back again, and all the time I intensely begged Archbishop John to pray for me so that God's will would be done. Through his prayers the blood pressure did not drop, and by morning I began to move and remained alive. And then everything returned to me: health, strength, vitality—and I felt as if I had become twenty years younger.

A few days ago, I had a dream during the night. I saw Archbishop John, who was not in full vestments, but only had on an epitrachelion, the cross and the panagia. A staff was in his left hand—the usual black staff with which bishops walk outside of church services. I recognized this epitrachelion at once. On his head he did not have a mitre, but a black klobuk. With his right hand he blessed me, then silently indicated to me with his right hand to continue walking on the same path that he had indicated when he was leaving for San Francisco—that is, to go along the path of the French Orthodox Church. Being well again, I understood that I should not rest and be inactive, but on the contrary should renew my activity in the same vein. This is my path. As it is written in the second epistle of St. Paul to Timothy:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. I have been defending the righteous Archbishop John. It seems this is my path.

I'm asking your prayers,

Vladimir Grabbe
Bologne, France
September, 1972

80.
Healing from Diptheria

If you talk to Russian people from Shanghai, each one of them will tell you that he or she was Vladika's favorite, and they honestly believe this. It's impossible not to believe it, because when Vladika looked at you, you were the only child in front of him, you were his love, everything. He was that concerned about you. It wasn't just the superficial: "You are one of my children." It was genuine love.

...I did have an unusual experience with Vladika. I was a very, very young girl at the time, and I was sick with diptheria. The doctor came in and the house had to be quarantined. My parents tried to take me to the hospital, and the hospital was full. I remember that I was kind of "in between," coming in and out of consciousness. Passing by the Cathedral, I thought, "Oh, I missed church, I missed the services today." And the next thing I remember, I was in the hospital and the nurse came out and said, "We have no beds. Take her back." So my par-

ents brought me back home, and I was really more or less in a coma most of the time. Then I had a wild dream that I was kind of sliding up and down the slides. My mother woke me up and said, "Vladika's here!" and I thought, "What does he want? I want to sleep." I looked at him, and he said, "What's the matter with you? You would do anything to miss the service." Still looking at him, I said, "I want to sleep." "You can't," he said. "I have to tell you a joke." I could hardly keep my eyes open. I didn't understand what was happening: he was going to tell me a joke? He stood there and laughed, and believe it or not, he told joke after joke after joke until finally, by looking at him, I started laughing because the whole thing was funny. And when I laughed, I gagged. He called my mother and said, "She's all right now. Clean her up." My mother cleaned my mouth out. Everything had broken loose and I could breathe again. After my mother cleaned me up, he put his hand on my forehead and said, "Now that you laughed at my joke, you can go back to sleep."

Clear up until a few years later I didn't even realize that this was a miracle. The only thing that was left over from the diptheria was that my voice got a little deeper, but other than that I survived. The Chinese doctor that took care of me had told my parents that I would not survive.

Valentina Harvey
Redding, California
February, 1982

81.
Healing from Meningitis

After World War II, Selma (Olga) Rodukoft got meningitis in a very severe form. The doctors were sure that, if for any reason she recovered, she would be blind, deaf and mental. Archbishop John prayed for her and she recovered completely. Now she is living here in Australia. She is quite old now and must be over eighty years old, but she has repeated this story many times.

Then there is another story about the vice-president of the Russian Committee at church, Chevelov, who tells the following account of herself:

Once she was very ill and the archbishop came to visit her and said, "Get up!" She got up and was never sick since.

Asking your blessings,

Nadia P. Pitts
St. Ives, Australia
January 23, 1987

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The author of the above testimony knew Archbishop John from the very day of his arrival in Shanghai. Her sons were his acolytes and were also witnesses to his miraculous intercession. Later, she kept up a correspondence with him; and it is amazing how he, having such a busy schedule, would write meticulous and complete answers to any questions she would ask. It was she who was

first responsible for having accounts of Blessed John's miracles collected by Bishop Savva.

82.
Fire from Heaven

Our old nun, Mother Augusta, wrote the following upon our request:

"Forgive me for disturbing you. For a long time I was hesitating whether I should write about Archbishop John in Shanghai. But because I am in advanced years and can die soon, I do not want to carry into the grave that which the Lord showed me unto instruction. Indeed, Archbishop John had great faith.

"I suffered very much... In 1939, I sent my daughter to Italy, to her husband. Her husband met her on the ship, brought her to his parents, lived with her for 11 days and then was commissioned to Africa. When he went away, the relatives told my daughter that she should leave their house. Not knowing the language and being only 17 years old, she wrote despondent letters to me. I prayed a lot. Two months passed by. I walked every day to the Shanghai Cathedral, but my faith began to waver. So I decided not to go to church anymore, but instead to visit my friends; and thus I did not hurry to get up earlier. My path went by the Cathedral, and here I heard singing inside the church. I went inside. Vladika John was serving. The altar area was open. Vladika was saying the

prayer, *Take eat, this is My Body,* and *this is my Blood... for the remission of sins,* and after this he got down on his knees and made a full prostration. At this time I saw the Chalice with the Holy Gifts uncovered, and at this time, after Vladika's words, a flame came down from above and descended into the Chalice. The form of the flame was like a tulip, but larger. I never in my life thought that I would see the actual sanctification of the Gifts as a flame. Faith was kindled in me once more. The Lord showed me Vladika's faith, and I was ashamed for my own faint-heartedness.

"I think that it would be good if you would add this incident to the biography—Life—of the archbishop. But please correct it and sign it the way you think best. Forgive me and bless me."

Concerning this incident, Bishop Savva added the following:

"One can find a similar case in the Life of St. Sergius of Radonezh, which was written by St. Epiphanius the Wise, disciple of St. Sergius, soon after the repose of the Saint. Here is what is written in the life: Once St. Sergius was serving the Divine Liturgy, and his disciple, Simon the ecclesiarch, was present. Simon saw a wondrous vision. He described how, when the Saint was serving, he saw a fire that was moving along the table of oblation, lighting the altar table and the surrounding altar. When the Saint was preparing himself to receive Communion, the divine fire swirled like a kerchief and entered into the Holy Chalice. Thus did

the Saint receive Holy Communion. Seeing this, Simon was filled with awe and trembling. The Saint, stepping away from the table of oblation, understood that Simon had been vouchsafed to behold this wonderful vision, and, summoning him, he said, 'My child, why is your spirit disturbed?' And the other answered, 'Master, I saw a wondrous vision; the Grace of the Holy Spirit is active with you.' The Saint then forbade him, saying, 'Do not tell anybody about what you have seen, until the Lord calls me from this life.'

"This is what Dimitry of Rostov tells about another case: 'It is written in the Life of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, that this great hierarch of God possessed the God-given Grace of being vouchsafed to apprehend the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the prepared Holy Gifts during the time of the bloodless sacrifice. He did not stop the flow of prayer until he saw the descent of the Holy Spirit. Once when he was serving and pronouncing the usual prayer of offering, he did not see the sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Having not yet finished the prayer, he started again from the beginning, but again the Holy Spirit did not come. And so he did it a third time. Not seeing the Holy Spirit, he wondered, began to cry and to mentally pray to God that he would be informed whose fault it was that the offered Gifts were being deprived of the Holy Spirit. Then, glancing at the deacon who stood on his left holding the fan, he saw that his face was dark with disturbance,

disfigured as if he had leprosy. Then the Saint took the fan from him, saying with meekness, "Child, abstain from receiving the Divine Gifts, and go to your home." Having dismissed the deacon from the divine altar, the holy Epiphanius again saw the Grace of the Holy Spirit coming upon the offered Gifts. After finishing the Divine Liturgy, the Saint summoned the deacon, asking what kind of sin he had done, which had interfered with the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the honorable Gifts. And the deacon then confessed the truth, that the preceding night he had been together with his wife... Then Saint Epiphanius, calling all priests and deacons and all his clergy, told them, "Oh children, if you want to be worthy of serving in the altar, loosen the shoes of your fleshly, irrational passions. Do not enter the divine altar tied with lustful inclinations, and listen to the Apostle, who said, *they that have wives be as though they have none* (I Cor. 7:29)."'"

I, too, can testify: When I visited Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, during the funeral of our father in the Lord, Metropolitan Anastassy, there occurred the following incident, which then did not strike me at all as something extraordinary. I stood together with Mother Mariamna in the monastery church. We decided to receive Christ's Holy Mysteries, and I went to have Confession. When I returned to my place, Nun Mariamna hastily told me that some God-fearing woman wanted to talk with me, and, pointing

her out to me, went also to have Confession. The indicated lady, absolutely unknown to me, began to relate about her sick husband, who was a foreigner and whose name I do not remember exactly. She added that she wished very much to see and talk to Archbishop John, who had come from Shanghai and was now living with us in San Francisco. We stood in church quite far from the altar. As soon as she finished uttering these words, I saw Archbishop John come out of the altar and direct himself straight toward us. This was long before the reading of the Hours before the Liturgy. Seeing him, I said to the lady, "Here comes the bishop." Then I approached the ambo, indicated the lady to the bishop and said, "This slave of God would like to have a talk with you." And suddenly I clearly heard Blessed John saying hurriedly, "I know, I know." I stepped aside, not wishing to be in the way of their talking. Soon she returned to me all in tears and posed the question to me: "Who could have told the bishop about my misfortune? The bishop told me that he knows everything and that he's praying..." Then and there the bishop had given soul-saving instructions to that unfortunate woman.

About this incident, it is interesting to note that Archbishop John, being in the altar, could in no way have heard our conversation, for it was—as I said before—quite far from the altar, and we spoke very softly. How did he find out about her sorrow? What made him come out to her before she could have had time to address herself to him?

This, of course, remains a mystery. At any rate, this case is a new proof of the clairvoyance of the bishop, since he had never met that woman before. Moreover, this is a demonstration of the great care that the bishop had towards people's sorrow and his prayerful intercession before God for them—in cases where those in sorrow did not even express their sorrows to him.

Abbess Ariadna
Convent of Our Lady of Vladimir
San Francisco, California
1967

83.
Call to Repentance

Dear Fathers,

Blessed John does not only intercede to bring us help and healing, but to teach us valuable lessons as well:

Recently a friend of mine and myself visited Jordanville Monastery. We were treated quite graciously, shown around by one of the monks. He told of the various holy men that were buried at the monastery. We venerated the relics of St. Seraphim, St. John the Baptist, the saints of the Kiev Caves, and even a thread from the robe of the blessed Theotokos. We prayed in the magnificently painted church and finally visited the bookstore where we were each given, to our great and unexpected joy, a piece of a robe that Blessed John had worn.

We left the monastery holding our treasures, marvelling at such a great outpouring of love.

One would think that such an outpouring would turn into charitable acts on my part as well, but such was not the case. When we returned to the city, we were met by another good friend whom I took aside and told the whole story. He asked me if he might have a section of the piece. I snipped off a tiny little piece for him, keeping most of it for myself.

Later, when we were parting, my other friend who had been present with me at Jordanville, cut his piece in half and gave it to my other friend. I promptly asked for the little piece I had given him back, figuring that he did not need two pieces.

We parted company and I proceeded on my journey to another city, where I reached into my pocket for the large piece of the robe that I was carrying and it was gone. I tore my suitcase apart, and all of my clothing, looking through them 5 or 6 times, but it was nowhere to be found. I felt such a sense of loss. The only piece that I had left of Archbishop John's robe was the tiny little piece that I had given my friend and had taken back. The realization of my stinginess was upon me. I called the other city where I had been but the piece was nowhere to be found there either. I suddenly knew that Blessed John had taught me a hard-learned lesson about the fruits of covetousness.

Days later, the piece was found by my friend's daughter, who looked at a small icon

of Archbishop John and remarked that his robe's color looked exactly like a piece of ribbon she had been playing with in church the other day. He went to the church and there was the piece sitting in the middle of the room...like Archbishop John had let the piece be found when I had repented of my error. When the piece was returned, I promptly cut it in two and gave it to another friend. I have half of the big piece and the tiny piece on the shrine in my icon corner, but the little piece constantly reminds me of the dear Saint's intercession for the salvation of my soul.

Yours in Christ,

J. M.
Atlanta, Georgia
February 3, 1987

84.
Hearkening to the Call of the Dying

On the fourth week of Great Lent, after Liturgy, a lady approached me and gave me a closed envelope, saying that this was what she wrote about our late Archbishop John. Before flying out of Vancouver, B. C., I opened the letter and read what was a clear proof of Blessed John's clairvoyance... Later, I called up the lady, asking her to verify that in her letter she had witnessed the truth of the described incident, which she did. This was Helen Michailovna Brynner, a woman from a well-known family in pre-revolutionary Russia. These were very wealthy people, mil-

lionaires, and also well known to all Russians of the Far East. Of course, she lost all her material wealth in Russia, but in place of it she acquired spiritual riches, which are incomparable to material wealth. [She was the aunt of the famous movie star Yul Brynner]. Here is what this servant of God, Helen Michailovna, wrote in the aforementioned letter:*

This took place in Shanghai in 1948. I used to live right next to the hospital of the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood. A nurse from there used to visit me every day to give injections. I was sick.

One day she came to me in a state of great excitement and told me what had happened that night when she had been on night duty. At about 3 a.m. she was called to a seriously sick man, who asked her to immediately call Bishop John because he felt very bad. He felt that he was dying, and requested that the bishop come and give him Holy Communion. The night was very stormy: a typhoon was raging with a most ferocious downpour. The wind blew down electric wires. The nurse answered the dying man that she could not fulfill his request because the telephone was not working, and because she was alone in the whole hospital and could not possibly leave it. The sick man was very upset and kept repeating that he must at once see the bishop. The nurse then promised him that as soon as a new nurse

* The above was written by Bishop Savva (see *Pravoslavnie Rus*, 1971, no. 19, p. 6).

would arrive, at 6 a.m., she would then at once rush to the bishop and would give the bishop his request.

Then all of a sudden, after about 30-40 minutes, a strong knocking was heard at the gates. To the inquiry of the sleeping watchman, "Who is there?" —there was an answer: "Open up the gate! I am Bishop John—I am being called, I am expected." The watchman opened. The bishop quickly crossed the yard and went into the hospital. Seeing the nurse who opened the door for him, he asked: "Where is here a seriously sick man who is expecting me? Lead me to him."

I read in your articles, dear Vladiko [Savva], descriptions of many cases of miraculous healings and clairvoyance of the late Archbishop John, and that is why I wrote this true incident for you: how Blessed John perceived the thought and need of the seriously sick man and went deep into the night to answer that call, drenched in a downpour of rain and terrifying wind.

Unquestionably this is another new factual proof of Archbishop John's gift of clairvoyance.

Helen M. Brynner
Great Lent, April, 1971

85.
Help After a Lung Operation

Upon returning home from a trip to Vancouver, B. C., I found a letter from my friend, an engineer who lives in San Francis-

co, dated April 5th of this year. Among other things he writes the following:

"To the cases of help which occurred through the prayers of Archbishop John, another incident has been added. One of the choir singers in the Burlingame [California] church had a lung surgically removed on Thursday. On Saturday his wife, our friend whom we knew from China, called on the telephone and, weeping, told us that his wound would not heal and that the bleeding had not stopped after already two days. I told her that she should at once come [to the Sepulchre of Blessed John] and we all would be there and serve a Panikhida for Archbishop John.

"The Panikhida was served at 3:30 p.m.. When she returned after the Panikhida to the hospital, they told her that the bleeding stopped and that the danger to her husband's life had passed. Her husband is already home; and, although he is very slow in recovering, he nevertheless did not die, as the the doctors had expected. Father Mitrophan, who serves Panikhidas at the grave of Archbishop John, can tell you about several similar cases...

"The Sepulchre is now enlarged thanks to our efforts; and the iconographer Pimen Sofronov has already painted three murals—full-length icons of Christ, Golgotha and the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God. By Pascha it will be almost finished. A lot of people come to pray in it. They sell candles, which people place before icons—more

than 100 dollars worth per week.

"It is an undeniable fact that a lot of cases of miraculous help occurred during Blessed John's life. But the fact that miraculous healings have begun at his grave after his death—is indeed very comforting. The Lord said: 'To whom shall I look, and where shall I dwell, but to him who is calm and humble, and trembles at My word?' (Isaiah 66:2).

"Wasn't Blessed John indeed like that?"

Bishop Savva
Great Lent, April, 1971

86.
Help for a Respiratory Infection

When I was in San Francisco (continues Bishop Savva), one day after the Divine service in the new cathedral a certain former member of the Cathedral Parish Council, Mr. Victor Shakaloff, took me to my apartment in his car. On the way he told me how his little son Dimitry, nicknamed Dima, had been sick when he was two and a half years old. They took him to the hospital. The doctors diagnosed some foreign virus: in other words, his respiratory system was infected. The infection began to spread and the boy was choking in unbearable suffering. The doctors then said that only prayer could help, that they were helpless to do anything. Shakaloff, the boy's father, became horrified.

He at once called St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Orpahage and asked that Archbishop John come to the telephone. He was informed that the bishop was serving and could not come to the phone. Then he at once left the hospital and rushed to the orphanage. The hierarch by then was at a Parish Council meeting. When he saw Shakaloff, he at once went to him, placed his hand on the man's shoulder and said: "Victor, go home, go home—I prayed." Mr. Shakaloff went home, asking others to pray for the saving of his son.

Early in the morning he went to the hospital and met the doctors, who had happy faces! They told him that a miracle had taken place, which was incomprehensible to them: the boy had simply begun to breathe normally, without any hindrance. In 3-4 days the father took his boy home absolutely healthy.

Shakaloff said that one day, about a year and a half later when the boy was already four years old, Archbishop John served in the Burlingame church and noticed Shakaloff's son in the crowd of people. "Dima, Dima," he called, "come here and hold my staff!" Dima walked up and held Blessed John's staff during the rest of the service.

And then Shakaloff testified: "Let them say all the slander they want about Archbishop John: I am convinced that it was first of all through his prayers that my son was delivered from death.

Victor Shakaloff
April, 1971"

87.
Saving of Two Lives

I.

One elderly lady (approximately 70 years old), a good believing Christian from San Francisco, recounted to me in detail her miraculous healing, only begging me, for some special reason, not to mention her name in print.

Once she was carrying boxes and packages to the post office. Having entered the postal building, she slipped because the floor was wet and slippery. She fell face down and her breast, near the right arm, hit a box. After some time she noticed that beneath the bruise there developed a lump the size of an apple. Gradually it began to bother her. She shared this with another lady, whose son had been healed from some terrible malady through Archbishop John's prayers, when all the doctors had been unable to help his fatal illness. So this lady advised her to turn to Archbishop John with a letter and ask him to pray for her. At that time Archbishop John lived in France and had not yet moved to San Francisco. And so she began to write a letter to him. She wrote half a letter and stopped, thinking: "It isn't right to write to Archbishop John so hurriedly—one should think it through, so that the letter is properly written." And so the letter was never finished.

Not long afterwards, Archbishop John arrived in San Francisco from France for a month or two. One day he was serving in a church. After the service, the sick lady came up to the bishop for a blessing. He blessed her, then held her hand for a while, looked carefully into her eyes and asked:

"Did you write to me?"

"No, Your Eminence," she answered, "I did not write to you."

After a few days she was again in the church when Blessed John was serving, and again when she approached for his blessing [as all the people did at the end of the service], he asked her the second time whether she had written to him. And she again, as before, answered that she had not.

She was very surprised: how did Blessed John know that she had begun to write him a letter, since nobody knew about that?

I forgot to ask her why she answered Blessed John that she had not written to him: was it because she had never mailed the letter, or because she was startled and did not say that she had started to write the letter but had not finished it and mailed it off?

A few days after that, the pain increased a great deal and this compelled her to go to the archbishop and to ask him to pray for her. I assume she went to see him at the St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Orphanage. She was brief, saying to him: "Holy Vladyko, I am very sick. I beg you—pray for me!"

"I shall pray," the archbishop answered.

After that she went home. That evening,

before going to bed she noticed that on the sore spot the swelling had bulged out. In the morning, as she got up—that very moment the swelling broke and blood gushed out profusely. She was taken to the hospital. At once a Russian woman-doctor examined her, and was very surprised. She advised immediate surgery, which was done at once. After two months, this woman-physician told her that she had cancer in a very malignant form and that she, according to medical observation, should have lived at most 3-4 days after the operation, or as an exception 30-40 days. But the fact that she remained alive—was a miracle!

Concluding her story, she said to me: "You see, Your Eminence, already five years have elapsed since my operation, and I'm still alive, and nothing bothers me any longer in connection with the surgery and my cancer. I firmly believe that the outcome was so successful only because of the prayers of the late Archbishop John."

When this lady was telling me all this, Blessed John had already passed away. She told me all this last year, not long after the repose of the archbishop: I forget whether it was after the funeral or after the 40th day after his death, when I again went to San Francisco for his memorial.

II.

The sister of my brother-in-law, from Canada, was literally prayed to life from certain death by Archbishop John. The archbishop kept visiting her in the hospital,

where she was lying with both her lungs ripped open, her ribs broken, and in immense suffering. It was a car accident.

When she was hospitalized the first time, her face was swollen like a pillow, so that her eyes were not visible, but she was conscious. When I said that Blessed John was standing next to her, she opened her eyelid with her fingers and saw him. Then she grabbed his hand and pressed it to her lips—for she could not speak due to the tube in her torn throat. From the cracks (instead of eyes) there poured out tears of joy.

After that initial time the bishop visited her several times and she began to recover. One time we came there and—as soon as we stepped into the common ward of the city hospital, where there were located patients requiring intensive care—Blessed John, not having heard anything yet, said to us: "Mousia is in critical condition now." Then he went to her, drew the curtain near her bed and prayed there for a long time at her side. Meanwhile, two doctors arrived and I asked them point blank: how critical was her condition, and should we tell her daughter—from whom we had concealed that her mother had a car accident so as not to upset her too much—to come from Canada? Both doctors answered me: "Whether to call her relative or not—is your business, but we do not guarantee that she will live till morning..."

Glory be to God—since that night she not only survived, but got well and went back to Canada. After the death of our blessed archpastor, she wrote to me expressing

her sympathy and gratitude to his memory. She mentioned that she was in good health, a year having passed by.

She and her sister, who was behind the wheel when the accident occurred, were telling us that they believe that it was of course the prayer of Blessed John that saved her.

Her name is Maria Tuscia.

Bishop Savva
May, 1967

88.
Healing for a Paralyzed Arm

I am testifying to the healing of the contorted, paralyzed arm of myself, Alexandra Ilyinichna Mullins, through the prayers of our Blessed John (Maximovitch).

This took place in 1964. My arm began to hurt terribly. I at once turned to doctors for help. Different physicians used different methods but nothing helped. My arm stopped bending at the elbow, and I of course could not hold a job any longer. Believing in the power of the prayers of our Blessed John, I asked him several times to pray for me, but the hierarch evidently was testing my faith in God. Every time he would bless me, he would say: "Pray to God."

A year passed by. I considered that I was already becoming a cripple, since all the doctors' medications failed to help. Then I again turned with a request to the bishop,

that he would ask the Lord and touch my ailing arm. The bishop, as always, became very serious: his eyes turned to heaven and he placed his hand on the sore spot on my arm and began to pray. With strong faith and hope I also prayed to the Lord God. And so several days passed by and my contorted arm became flexible and I began to work. A feeling of infinite gratitude to the Lord God and His worthy servant and man of prayer, compels me to inform all believing people about this miracle wrought through the prayers of our beloved Archbishop John.

Alexandra Mullins
July 25, 1968
1258 — 13th Ave.
San Francisco, California

89.
Help in Finding Work

Be not faithless, but believing.
(John 20:27)

My eldest daughter was looking for employment for a long time, and all in vain. Due to her lack of success, she fell into total depression. I also felt very bad because of her lack of success, but I strove not to show this because there was no way I could console her.

During this time I was given as a gift a little missionary magazine "The Orthodox Word," along with a Russian language supplement entitled "Blessed John Maximovitch,"

which attracted my attention. I automatically began to read it.

I did not know Archbishop John, but I knew that he had a lot of people who revered him for his life and prayer and that he now rested under the newly built Cathedral, in a Sepulchre specially prepared for him. Suddenly I was enlightened by the thought of asking the prayers of Blessed John to help find a job for my daughter.

Involuntarily I knelt and began to cry uncontrollably and simply implore Blessed John with my request. That was in the middle of the week. On Saturday of that same week I called my daughter again, without any hope of hearing anything consoling. Asking her the same question concerning work, I suddenly heard a spark of hope, although ten other girls had applied for the one position she wanted.

Not giving it a thought, I told her to come to me at once so that we could pray to one Orthodox hierarch about whom I had read a few days before and found to be a man of great prayer. She came at once and I said to her, "Daughter! You are a Catholic. But this hierarch prayed for all." I showed her the photograph of him in the magazine. "Let us pray together."

So we prayed as best as we knew how, kneeling and bitterly weeping. We prayed, we begged...

One Monday my daughter called me up and said, "Mother, I got the job. I'm going to work." This was so unexpected that I at once simply froze, sensing only one thing,

that Blessed John had heard us. Now my daughter, with God's help, successfully works. Everyone treats her well and she is happy with both the people and the work. Praying to Blessed John, she expressed a desire to be a member of the Archbishop John Maximovitch Fund of Los Angeles and began to ask to be sent literature on Archbishop John. Glory be to our God.

Z. Sylvonic
Los Angeles, California
August 17, 1971

90.
A Health-Restoring Vision

With deep sorrow did we find out about the sudden, unexpected demise of the deeply revered, unforgettable, dear and much-loved Blessed Hierarch, Archbishop John Maximovitch, whose light-bearing memory never will be erased and to whose prayerful help we are hastening in the moments of life's hardships.

I wish to share a vision I had.

Six or seven years ago, I was expecting a visa from my daughter in America, as I was living temporarily in France. One Monday I received a letter from my daughter, who asked me to meet her in a station on the following Sunday. That same day I answered her that of course I would meet her. And that very day, on Monday, I got terribly sick: my temperature was almost 40° C., there was a pain in my side and a dry cough

—all symptoms of pneumonia or pleurisy. In spite of all the attempts of the doctors, there was no improvement and I was in a desperate state, thinking that I would not be able to meet my daughter. Friday morning I began to pray intensely to the holy Archbishop John. That afternoon I clearly saw in reality the holy hierarch come in full vestments with a staff and sit down on a chair near my bed! Overwhelmed and in utter happiness, I stretched my hands out to him for his blessing, but the vision disappeared and there was nothing. Then I got up, went to the table and poured a glass of water. After drinking it, I went again to lie down. Not even a minute passed. The bishop appeared for a second time in the same vestments, standing with his staff near my door. I jump-up from the bed—and no one was there! Consoled and happy, I laid down again, quite assured that everything would be all right. So I fell into a peaceful sleep for the first time in the course of my sickness. The next day, having had a 40° temperature, I got up; although I was still quite weak, I was absolutely healthy with a 37° temperature—and all my sickness was at once gone. The power of the prayers of our unforgettable Blessed John, in the duration of a few hours, got me on my feet.

Unforgettable, dear Blessed John, pray to God for us!

A Note: In spite of the fact that I was then 67 years of age, whenever he would serve, no matter how long the services would last, I would never feel any fatigue or hard-

ship from the long standing; quite the opposite, some unearthly happy feeling would envelope not only me but my children also, and the wonderful vision I here described is indelibly impressed on my mind.

Our dear Holy Hierarch, do not forget us in your holy prayers, and we shall never forget you.

Nadezhda Vladimirovna Levitskaya
May 22, 1967
200 West 109th St., Apt. 134
New York, New York

91.
Rescue from an Obsession with Obedience

I consider it my duty to inform you about my miraculous deliverance thanks to the prayers of Archbishop John. After the repose of my late husband I wrote a letter with a request that I be accepted into the Lesna Convent. For ten years I had had a great longing, a fervent wish for this; and Mother Abbess Theodora and Father Elder Nicander agreed to accept me into the convent. I was so happy that I at once sold and gave away all my possessions and speedily travelled all the way to this long-awaited convent. There I stayed about four years, when suddenly something strange began to occur with me: I would eat nothing for two weeks in a row; I would not drink or take any medication; for whole days and nights in a row

I would sit up in bed, not leaving my cell, and would hardly talk to anyone, uttering just separate words only if there was a need. Mother Abbess Theodora visited me several times, warning me that if I would not begin to eat she would be compelled to send me to a hospital; but everything was in vain because I was convinced that I was doing all this as an obedience to the elder. So I was sent to a mental hospital, where I stayed several months; but since that hospital was quite a distance from the monastery, they would come to get me before great feasts and take me to the monastery for a few days. Oh, how happy I was and thankful to be at least a few days in my dear convent! But after a few days they would again return me to the hospital.

My friends from Venezuela found out about this, collected some money and sent one friend to bring me back. Since at that time I also had a bad case of rheumatism—which caused my fingers on both hands not to bend any longer and my shoulders, elbows and knees to ache a lot—I agreed to go for a while back to a warm climate to get some health back, if, that is, Mother Abbess and the elder would bless. I received the blessing and flew back to Venezuela, burning with the desire to return as soon as possible to my own dear convent. But the Lord judged otherwise... Here I got very sick again, and my "strikes of famine" began to reoccur more often so that I almost never left the hospital, often fainting or simply collapsing from excessive weakness. Thus I spent all the time

lying (dressed) in bed. Especially before great feasts I would stop eating and drinking altogether, and no one was able to talk me out of it. As a result, instead of going to church I would end up in a hospital.

Yes, I could pray then, but in secret, short snatches, quickly uttering some little fragmentary phrase from a prayer and also quickly crossing myself, as if someone was not allowing me to pray. Once while lying in bed I clearly saw the heads of Mother Abbess Theodora and Elder Nicander over me, and both were clearly saying to me, "Do not eat anything and do not drink." And I, a silly one, was obedient and after that was again several times in the hospital because of my "strikes of famine." Poor Father Nicander used to write to me that I was listening not to him but to the enemy, and that I should force myself to eat and drink; but the deceiver so convinced me that I was doing the wish of my elder. I was listening to the enemy, being convinced that I was being obedient to the elder.

Once Father Nicander wrote to me that I should at once write to you, Father Mitrophan [in San Francisco], asking for the prayers of Archbishop John for my healing. I am very thankful to you, Father Mitrophan, that you wrote to me so quickly, saying that you served a Panikhida at Blessed John's Sepulchre and are praying to him for my healing. Yes, and also Abbess Theodora, in Father Nicander's letter, confirmed her total agreement with him. In your letter you sent me the grace-filled little piece of cotton and

instructed me to stand before the holy icons and pray thusly: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of Archbishop John, heal me a sinner"—and with this holy cotton to make three signs of the cross over my forehead, saying every time: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," which I do with faith every morning. In such a way I prayed for 30 days, as you wrote to me, but already after 21 days I was healed. This is how it happened:

One day when all of us were called to have breakfast, I did not go (I live in the Diocese Old-Age Home). Then the manager of this home came up to me and offered to bring me a cup of tea, so that at least I'd drink some tea, but I refused. And then when all finished breakfast and the tables were cleaned, I suddenly became aware of the thought that I had been repeating in my mind: "Only do not be obedient; on no account be obedient." And—totally unexpected to myself—I suddenly jumped out of bed and quickly and decisively went to the kitchen, where I drank two cups of coffee with milk. After that I began to eat and drink normally, my strength came back to me and the merciful Lord enlightened me that this had been a demonic state of "prelest," which had lasted for two years. When I told that to the local priest, Father Sergius Gudzenko, he replied by saying, "Father Nicander and myself knew it" (since they evidently exchanged letters about me, as I assume).

After my healing through the prayers of Blessed John, the next day—from the very

beginning of the day—the enemy ferociously attacked me, so that I could not pray properly, sitting in my cell as usual. All the time I would invent some sort of work, would take rides to town on business, so as to get distracted from the attacks of the enemy. Often I would enter my room, stand in prayer before the icons, repeat sentences of prayers, cross myself, make prostrations and leave the room again. My arms and legs trembled. I could not endure it any longer and went to Father Sergius. I told everything to his Matushka, and she read the prayers of exorcism over me and I at once peacefully went home. But this was still not the end of the enemy's attacks, although they were considerably lessened. The enemy began to attack me every night, from evening till morning, but that was only several times. I made a firm resolve not to give in; I resisted, asking the Lord to help, and the Lord helped.

For some reason, the enemy would attack with greater strength when I would lie down in bed, so that for two weeks I would both fall asleep and war with the enemy while sitting in an armchair. Because of this my feet became so swollen that I could not put on shoes and had to walk in night slippers. But from the beginning of Passion Week up to today—glory be to God—, all is quiet.

Asking for your prayers and blessing,

sinful Galina Hockheim
Valencia, Venezuela
May 11/24, 1972

92.
Returning of a Loved One

After having read the book *Blessed John Maximovitch* (in Russian), which I bought at his Sepulchre, I got all stirred emotionally and decided to add more to my descriptions (see pp. 360-365). Here is another incident which was told to me by my client of many years, whom I trust and believe. She has as a tenant a good, hard-working young woman, who endured a lot of suffering... The girl met a man who was divorced and had a son from his first marriage. She fell in love with him and they got together. A little girl was born and she again became pregnant, when he became infatuated with another woman, leaving her and her child without any support. The poor girl was in despair. She went to the Sepulchre of Archbishop John and cried and prayed before his tomb.

Meanwhile, the grandmother of the man who is now her husband wrote to him a letter, reminding him that in their family many had died of cancer and that if he would not marry the girl and legitimatize the children, then he also may be punished by the Lord with the same fate. And he heeded this. He returned to the good girl and married her. A baby boy was born to them and was baptized. My client (and their landlady) became the godmother. Both parents are working, and their life has entered a normal routine thanks to the prayers of him who heard the

pleas of human suffering when they were addressed to him.

This is what I felt obliged to inform. The story is not complex and perhaps too usual for outsiders; but what sorrow assails a loving heart when it loses the object of its love! Blessed John knew that!

Vera C. Terehov
October 15, 1971
San Francisco, California

93.
Reading of Thoughts

Glory be to our Lord that we were vouchsafed to live and pray together with such a righteous man as our late Hierarch John! May his memory be eternal and blessed.

I was once in church when Archbishop John was serving. The service seemed to me very long and tiresome. Being very fatigued, I thought to myself: "I wish the bishop would shorten the service a little." But I continued to stand patiently. After the service, as was the custom, I, together with all the people, went up to the hierarch for a blessing, when suddenly he said to me:

"If you cannot stand for a long time and your feet hurt, then you can sit down or even better leave the church, since your apartment is close to the church."

I was taken aback and at the same time amazed how easily Blessed John read my

thoughts in church.

T. B.
1967

94.
Clairvoyant Fearlessness

I am sending you two photographs: one of Archbishop John... and a shot of the Shanghai "Surety of Sinners" Cathdral. It is located in the French Concession and it has three altars: one side altar to St. Innocent of Irkutsk and the other to Apostle Simon Zelotes. I lived right across from it.

In 194? there occurred a conflict between the Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese drew up forces and opened fire across the English Concession on the battleships which stood at anchor on the Wampoo River. The battleships were near the shore, hidden behind a large, long terraced building, in which there were 36 apartments. In the middle of this house was located our Orthodox church. The Chinese gunmen were shooting this building and destroyed all the apartments in it to their foundation. At the first firing, the people who lived there ran away from their apartments. The news reached Blessed John that all the apartments on the right and the left of the church were totally destroyed. On the first floor, where there had previously been a kitchen, a medical supply was centered. A shell fell into it and all the glass jars and even shelves were destroyed—but the apartment with the church in it has been

preserved. The walls are all intact, with not even a crack in them. No one believed this rumor. But Archbishop John decided to visit this church at night, when no one walked even the streets of the Concessions. When he came to a bridge over a canal, he was stopped by Japanese guards. Since the Japanese did not understand him, one of them ran for a Japanese interpreter, who said to the bishop that one could not walk the streets to the church because the Chinese infantry was engaged in a battle with the Japanese marines along the entire street. One could clearly hear the firing. And so the interpretor said, "You are going to a certain death."

But the bishop requested a written permit to go there anyway. Then the interpreter ran back and brought him the permit from the headquarters.

Blessed John walked down the dark street, and when he came out into the firing zone, the firing stopped as he crossed it and then again continued behind him.

He visited the church and returned the same way. Later he related that in the whole house even the window glass was untouched, and that not a single icon had fallen down from its place. And when he walked back across the bridge, the Japanese guard gave him the military salute because they were amazed, saying that God had walked him there and back.

Here is a description of how Archbishop John saw the soul of a man and read his

thoughts:

As mentioned above, I used to live across from the "Surety of Sinners" Cathedral. One Saturday evening they rang the bells at 6 o' clock for the Vigil, and I went to the gates of the cathedral. I wanted to receive Holy Communion that Sunday, but I must say that I did not tell anyone about it.

As I approached the cathedral gates, I saw that from the other end Blessed John was coming, evidently returning from a visit to the hospital of the "Orthodox Brotherhood." I came up for a blessing. The bishop asked me, "You will receive Holy Communion tomorrow?"

"No, Vladiko!" I answered.

"But why?" he asked.

"Actually, I wanted to, but I visited Basil Ivanovich and he offered me a little meat cutlett." (Although at that time there was no fast, I would always abstain from meat before receiving Holy Communion).

"But what is on your soul?" asked the bishop.

"I repent, Vladiko," I replied.

"Then what does meat have to do with it? I bless you to receive Communion," he said, and went away!

Monk Nestor Levitin
August 28/September 10, 1969
Syracuse, New York

95.
The Saint's Healing of Those Who Turned Against Him

Having learned that you are gathering material concerning the late Archbishop John of Shanghai, I consider it my duty to inform you of the occurrences of help from the prayers of Blessed John, of which I was a witness through the words of people well known to me personally.

1.) There was a case of the healing of a young girl, T.. She became completely incapacitated while living in Tubabao [Philippines]. From the Russian Camp there she was transferred to the hospital. At that time Blessed John was absent. The girl was a former student of the Shanghai Russian Gymnasium (High School), where during her time Blessed John had also taught. It was he who managed to get all the Russian refugees out of Shanghai. At the time of her illness he was not in Shanghai, but wrote letters to the Russians in the camp. This girl also received a letter from him, saying, "Pray! All will be well." This was either in 1950 or 1951: she does not recall exactly. Soon the sick girl T. became well and received a permit to come to the U.S.A., whereas previously she had received a refusal due to her exposure to tuberculosis.

2.) In the Shanghai hospital a Latvian lady was placed amidst Russians. She told

me personally, when she was already in the the U.S.A., how one day Blessed John came into the hospital and began to distribute small pieces of prosphora among the sick, coming close to each one. He also came up to her, but she said to him, "I am not Orthodox, but I ask you very much to pray for me." Archbishop John told her that it was all right if she was not Orthodox and gave her a piece of prosphora. After visiting everyone, Blessed John left.

"Soon I got well and left for the U.S.A. I believe in the power of Blessed John's prayer and I know that it was he who healed me" —this is how Maria Osolin concluded her account concerning her healing.

3.) A person of high clerical calling contracted a cold, but the usual measures did not help. Every day at 4 p.m. the temperature would rise considerably. The physicians could not diagnose the ailment, and the sick man would get much weaker. On one of my visits to him, he told me, "I decided to send a request to Archbishop John to pray for me, a sinner." Archbishop John at that time was in France. As soon as Archbishop John received the letter with the request of the sick one to pray for him, the sick one at once became absolutely well. That was in 1955, in California. At that time the above-mentioned cleric deeply honored Archbishop John and had reverence for him; but in the course of time his attitude, as also that of many others, changed for the worse towards Blessed John, and he forgot about the re-

ceived healing. This case of healing I can confirm with an oath in the presence of that man who received healing through the holy prayers of Archbishop John.

4.) A healing from a severe illness. A certain Mr. A. K. became sick, complaining of dizziness, nausea and general weakness. Tests showed that in his middle ear there appeared water. The hospital treatment did not help, and his condition became worse. Soon he fell into a coma, barely breathing. They gave him oxygen. Following my advice they sent a telegram to Blessed John in France, with a request to pray for the seriously sick man. The very next day the sickness was gone as if it had never been, and our friend was released from the hospital. This took place approximately in 1957-1958 in Los Angeles. In the course of time, the formerly sick man, under the influence of other people, fundamentally changed towards Blessed John, forgetting the healing he had received. He caused Blessed John a lot of suffering. In the course of the following years this acquaintance of ours suffered from high blood pressure, a nervous breakdown, and general sclerosis in a form that was very difficult to treat. Three years ago he died.

5.) One very pious Russian Orthodox man became very seriously ill. He had to make a decision whether or not to have a very complicated surgery: a replacement of a worn-out section of his spine with an artificial section made out of plastic. Early in the morning, before the surgery, I sent a

telegram to Blessed John in San Francisco, asking him to pray for the seriously sick man, indicating the hour of the surgery and his name. Blessed John knew the family and loved them. We believe that the operation was very successful thanks to the prayer of Archbishop John. The sick man began quickly to recover and later returned to his former work. The surgery was performed on the day of Saints Cyril and Methodius, May 11/24, 1966, in Los Angeles. Before the operation the sick man, M. P., received Holy Communion, giving himself over to the will of God. He is healthy up to this day.

Glory be to God for all His great mercies according to the prayers of the now late Archbishop John Maximovitch.

Nadezhda Shoomliansky
July 24/August 6, 1971
28915 N. Banquet Cyn. Rd.
Saugus, California 91350

96.
Restoring of Life through the Holy Mysteries

Bless, O Lord!

I want to describe a miracle that took place through the prayers of our ever-memorable Archbishop John.

In Shanghai in 1945, my relative worked as a nurse's aid in the Jewish Hospital. One midnight the door bell rang and she went to see who it was through a little window in the door, not knowing if she should open

it right away since she had just recently begun to work there. She told the head nurse that it was Archbishop John, and the head nurse said, "Quickly open the door." She opened it and went up for a blessing. Not saying anything, Blessed John proceeded along the corridor. They watched, wondering to whom he would go in the ward. Then he went in where there was a woman lying in a coma. A concilium of doctors had stated that she should die that night. Near her sat her brother. Having entered, Blessed John placed an icon and began to pray. Then, having blessed her, he asked the brother whether she had received Holy Communion. "No," answered the brother, "we seldom go to church. She became sick and went to the hospital."

The bishop left and after some time she opened her eyes and said to her brother, "I saw that near my bed a monk stood and prayed, and he asked me if I had received Holy Communion. I said no, and he blessed me and left." The brother asked if she would want to receive Holy Communion, to which she said yes. Then he asked the nurse how that could be done, and she said that they would telephone the cathdral early in the morning. But even before they telephoned, a priest came in and said that the bishop had sent him to a particular ward to give Holy Communion to the sick woman. She received the Holy Communion with such great joy and began to get better. Later she left the hospital and came, together with her brother, to the cathedral. When she saw the

bishop, she said to him, "Your Eminence, you visited me in the hospital." He had a talk with them and concluded, "Do not forget the Lord, and go to church and pray." Afterwards she became a religious Christian.

And in that Jewish Hospital, the gateman was given an order that at any time, day or night, the doors must be opened to Blessed John. Blessed John also visited the hospital with his altar boys on the Feast of Theophany, bringing holy water and blessing the Orthodox Christians there by sprinkling them with it, while the boys sang the troparion: "When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Holy Trinity was made manifest..." and so on. He did the same at Christmas.

Anna [Lushnikova]
1967

97.
A Car-Accident Victim Restored to Health

We had a great sorrow befall us: our Archbishop John was transferred to Brussels [from France]. I was at his farewell service. The archbishop was in his "schema-looking hat" [a strange-looking foldable mitre created by his orphans]. His sermon consisted only of a few words. But he looked very sorrowful.

In our days, I think that this man stands higher than all the people in our whole world. He lives already on a level for-

eign to us. It was not for nothing, they say, that in one Paris church (Roman Catholic), a priest addressing the youth said, "You demand proofs; you say that there are no miracles now, no saints. Of what use are theoretical proofs for you, when today on the streets of Paris a saint is walking?"

Last summer, near the Versailles church, I met a French woman who had converted to Orthodoxy. She, showing me the street, told me that after some sort of automobile collision she had been dying in a hospital. She had asked for Blessed John, about whom she had heard much. When he arrived and came to her, she saw his eyes. He began to pray and she felt better; the pain stopped and she fell asleep. In the morning when she woke up, she was absolutely well. The doctors were amazed, saying that a miracle had simply taken place, and that she would live. Very soon after that she was on her feet again...

Olga Rudolfovna Gutan
France, 1961

98.
Termination of a Drought

In 1978 there was a terrible drought throughout the western United States, especially in central California, which is the center of the nation's agricultural food output. The two previous years had been very dry also. The ground by 1978 was so dry that it was all cracked, as was clearly visible to any tra-

veller throughout all the highways of the plains. The sight of the suffering emaciated cattle was especially pathetic, when one realized that, if the heavens would not send abundant rain upon the thirsty land—and quick—, the cattle would have to be killed off since it would not be fit for meat, either.

With such gloomy thoughts a husband and wife, two friends of St. Herman's Brotherhood, were often travelling in the vicinity of the once fertile Salinas River Valley, now hot and dry. Being conscientious Orthodox Christians, they could not but shudder at the prospect of such lamentable consequences if God was not to send down His rain. Of course, God's people prayed for the life-sustaining precipitation all over the land—but weeks passed and there was no rain. It seemas if God did not hear them.

One day while travelling across this pathetic-looking spectacle of groaning nature, the wife and mother of the family, seeing the same sight for miles and miles, came to a state of utter despair. She knew well that prayers were still offered all the time in many places—but to no avail. In her contrite heart she exclaimed to the Lord: "To whom then should we pray for rain? Whose prayers will intercede for the suffering nature? Help us, O Lord!"

And soon after this she saw a strange dream. While visiting our monastery some time later she told us about it. We asked her to describe it in a letter. This is the content of that letter:

"Concerning my dream—all I can say is that even then I did not remember it too clearly. I should have written it down right away, but I, a sinner, did not do it then. But I remember for certain that I saw Archbishop John. He did not say anything to me, however. It seemed that he was sitting—whether in his full vestments or not, I don't recall exactly. Then I came up to him for a blessing and, bowing down, I thought to myself: "Oh, here it is! That's to whom we should pray." I can't say for sure whether he blessed me then or not (though that's very important—whether there was a sign of the Cross in the dream). But as if answering my thought, Archbishop John turned slightly back, and from behind him he took and handed to me a little bottle apparently of holy *water*, and my dream was over.

"I decided that this *was* the answer; that is, that we should pray *to* him for help. So I began to pray for the repose of the soul of Archbishop John, adding at the end "through his holy prayers" and asking for the rain. And soon after that the rains came —and the drought was over: of course, *not through my prayers*. At that time I thought it very strange, as I *personally* did not know Archbishop John at all, and also at that time did not think of him; that is, in connection with the drought. And why should I of all people see such a dream? It is incomprehensible and almost unbelievable to me, especially as the time goes by. That was not in 1976, but in 1978, as I recall; and it was precisely then that the drought ended.

"With sincere respects,

Mrs. Irene Vagin
November 7/20, 1979
Salinas, California"

99.
Help in Childbirth

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Thank you again for sending me this book about Blessed Vladika John... I have strongly felt his prayers when in praying myself; I have pleaded to him to intercede with our Lord.

I was in the hospital with a laboring woman a couple of weeks ago. When in the middle of very active labor, the mother experienced acute, constant abdominal pain and the baby became distressed (as observed on the fetal monitor—the fetal heart dropped to half the normal rate). She was rushed to the operating room for a forceps delivery. I went with her; and as I was standing outside the operating room looking through the glass windows, I began praying to Vladika John to intercede for this woman and her child. —The fetal heart immediately returned to normal and stayed that way until delivery about 10 minutes later.

Thank you, Blessed Vladika John, for hearing all who call upon you.

God bless your work. In Christ,

Anne Barkham
March 30, 1987
Vancouver, B. C., Canada

100.
The Saint's Own Approval of Publishing Miracles

Ever since the infamous trial in San Francisco, when one segment of Archbishop John's clerical colleagues attempted to publicly defame the righteous man—there was felt an urgent need to publicize the good and holy deeds of the blessed one. But when his sudden repose came as an inevitable consequence of his being the object of persistent harassment, the need to publish his *Life and miracles* became the duty of the universal consciousness of the Church. It seemed natural that such an undertaking would meet general approval, support and acclaim. But instead—to the amazement of all who love God and His Saints—a veritable suppression fell upon those who would say a good word about the new God-chosen wonderworker of the 20th century! Amazingly enough, a whole series of obviously planned attempts began to stifle the good news about Blessed John. Just to mention a few: the first biographer, Bishop Savva, wrote to the compilers of this book that, because of his spreading the veneration of Vladika John, he would endure persecution and so end his life. He was then forced to retire, silenced and forbidden to act as a bishop, because of which he soon died (in January, 1972), never finishing his biographical attempts. The two little works on

the Saint which did appear were prevented from being sold at the synodal bookstore and were returned to the publishers. Divine Liturgies at the Saint's Sepulchre, which had once been served often (mostly by Archimandrite Mitrophan), were officially restricted to once a year, and even the customary reading of the Psalter at his tomb during services, when the Sepulchre was open, was forbidden. And the St. Herman Brotherhood was reprimanded for printing material on Blessed John almost every time some testimonies of his miracles appeared—in the free press in free America! When questioned by the late Fr. Seraphim Rose, the ruling bishop said indignantly, "Don't print about Archbishop John until his enemies die!" But why? —was the natural reaction to this. —By then his friends would also be dead and there would be nothing left to print! The significant answer followed: "Then you can write what you want!" —meaning that *then* it would be all right to "weave" ecclesiastically harmless, impotent legends and not preserve truthful, perhaps disturbing accounts of a real-life Saint based on facts witnessed by those who actually knew the Saint the way he really was. The St. Herman Brotherhood complained about this suppression of the truth to another hierarch, Bishop Nektary, a friend and defender of Blessed John. In response, Bishop Nektary stood up, crossed himself and concluded: "It would be a *sin* on your part if you, having received these testimonies and personally verified them, would not publish them for whatever reason."

What interests us, however, is this: what is the will of the Saint himself regarding the attempts to publish about him?

There are many past cases of when Saints would posthumously confirm the verity of their lives. For example, when the writings of the great Bishop Ignatius Brianchininov were being subjected to criticism, the holy bishop appeared to a woman and told her, "All that is written in my books is the truth." In like manner did Blessed John posthumously appear to his closest friend and disciple, Archimandrite Mitrophan, blessing and encouraging him in the task of recording his own miraculous intercessions and spreading his veneration. Here is how Fr. Mitrophan himself described this:

"Peace be to your souls and salvation! I have made a resolve to apply myself most seriously to gathering material about Vladika John... I felt an urgent need to do this, and that night after my decision I clearly and close-up saw Archbishop John. He was very joyful and blessed me. Praise the Lord in his Saints. *It is pleasing to God*, because the Saints of God perform miracles not by their own power, but by His Divine Power. I already have verified a series of cases of when people received healings... Mercy and God's blessing upon you... I kiss you in the Lord. I will diligently pray for you in the Holy Land.

Your fervent supplicant before God,

unworthy Archimandrite Mitrophan

August 17/30, 1972

San Francisco, California"

EPILOGUE

The importance of Blessed John for the people of the 20th century cannot be underestimated. Those who have read the entirety of this book have heard undeniable testimony—coming from all over the world—of the tremendous spiritual power embodied in this frail little man. God was drawn to the burning, loving heart of Blessed John, which became a vessel of His grace. He entrusted the Saint with heavenly secrets and the ability to transcend physical laws, making him a point of contact between Himself, the Creator, and us, His creatures.

Now that the venerators of Blessed John have for twenty years sought to glorify him throughout the world, his name has become associated with the image of a courageous, adventurous hero who did something miraculous at almost every turn. This, to be sure, is the image that emerges if one looks at his life from a spiritual point

of view. But those who did not know him during his lifetime should honestly ask themselves: would we have viewed him thus if we had seen him *directly*, not through the filter of two decades of his universal veneration? Let us remember that many active church-goers, conscientious clergy and widely respected hierarchs rejected or even despised Blessed John when he was alive. They openly hissed at him when he walked into church, said that he was "proud" and in "prelest," and likened him to the nasty character of Father Ferapont in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*.

Our immediate reaction when hearing of such people is: "How could people be so blind? Wasn't it obvious that he was a Saint?". *No, it was not "obvious."* If one viewed the Blessed One externally, he was a shocking spectacle: dishevelled, bent over, with an impediment that made his speech sound like senseless babble. The firmness of his God-directed will—the very quality that enabled him to reach such heights of asceticism—was mistaken for pride and irrational stubbornness. To many, he was just a cranky, self-willed old man who insisted on his own, "wrong" ideas about what the Church should be doing. And what was worse to the worldly-wise was that he could not be utilized for the glory of any clique or party. He was free before God. In short, he was an absolute disgrace according to worldly logic, which sees only external appearances and looks for temporal advantages for oneself or one's group.

The world, which lies in evil and whose prince is the devil, sought to diminish the influence of Blessed John. Although it is impossible for that which is godly to "succeed" in terms of this fallen, corruptible earth, Saints like Blessed John are indeed victors in the face of eternity and the Last Judgment. The present dominion of evil should not cause us to passively allow ungodliness to triumph. It is our duty to *defend* the good against the attacks of the world. Therefore, even if we had been among those who saw behind external appearances and common opinions, even if we would have felt sympathy for Blessed John when he was being maligned and put on trial, *this is not enough.* If we are to be followers of what is godly, we must be heroes just as Blessed John was. We must be ready to risk even our "good name"—our personal or group status and "credibility"—in proclaiming the unmitigated power of God, Who is glorified in His Saints.

An Orthodox priest who has himself witnessed several miracles of Blessed John, has well said that "Blessed John is a kind of 'watershed,' especially in our time, between people. One can observe many clear examples: those who are venerating Blessed John turn out to be people dedicated and faithful to the Church of Christ, and those who do not venerate and even defame him, reveal themselves to be pursuing mercenary purposes and filled with conceit."

In most cases, it is envy that causes people to downplay the glory of a Saint. As a true apostle of Christ, Blessed John was an

embarrassment to mere administrators who lacked his spirit. He was moved by love, and this love was given back to him in the same pure, unconditional form. Those who envied him were moved by calculations of what was most "prudent," and any "love" they may have received was merely the conditional respect commonly given to people of high standing. They wished to do away with Blessed John because his love was very uncomfortable to them.

Disagreement surrounding the veneration of a Saint is nothing new in the Church. For example, we all know and love Saint Seraphim as a great Russian Saint. What is not well known, however, is the extent to which people derided Saint Seraphim during his life and sought to wipe out his memory among the faithful after his death. His followers faced great hardships in glorifying their beloved father and teacher. In fact, had it not been for the influence of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II in canonizing the Saint, his jealous enemies would have had their way, and today he would scarcely be known at all.

Despite the devil's attempts to obscure the noble images of the Saints, which can awaken and inspire faith in Christians with inestimable power, Christ has promised that *the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church* (Matt. 16:18). In the case of Blessed John, the testimony of sanctity has become so abundant and obvious that the deceptions and tricks of the evil one have been impotent to hide it. Orthodox bishops have already celebrated full services to Blessed John, consti-

tuting local glorifications (canonizations) of him as a Saint.

There can be no doubt that Blessed John has been sent as a gift of holiness to the people of the last days. At a time when *imitation* has become the norm in all aspects of life, when the authentic spirit of the Christian Faith has been so hidden that most are oblivious of its very existence, Blessed John can be seen as a model of *genuineness.* He is a kind of "measuring stick" that indicates who and what is real in our confusing times. The unit of measure is nothing else than pure Christian love, which Blessed John possessed and distributed in abundance. With this love, the intense struggle of spiritual life becomes *worth the effort.* Without it, all that remains of human relationships and church life is one type of manipulation or another: whether in the form of slander and deceitful traps, or in the form of mutual flattery and recognition.

Blessed John has set the right "tone" of true apostleship in the modern world. As more people are drawn into the Orthodox Church of Christ before the final unleashing of evil, may they look to him as their loving guide and a pastor who knows no death.



"Tell the people:
although I have died,
I am still alive!"

–Blessed John